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A SHORT LIFE OF

William Ewart Gladstone

BY

CHARLES H. JONES.



NEW YORK:

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William

Ewart

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A SHORT LIFE

OF

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE,

*WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS SPEECHES
AND WRITINGS.*

BY

CHARLES H. JONES,

AUTHOR OF

"LORD MACAULAY: HIS LIFE, HIS WRITINGS," "A SHORT LIFE OF
CHARLES DICKENS," ETC.



NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,

1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.

1880.

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PREFACE.

IN the long roll of English statesmen and party leaders there is none, probably, who has won such cordial sympathy and esteem from the American public as Mr. Gladstone. Our own political struggles are so absorbing and exhausting that in general we have little interest to spare for those electoral contests which occasionally disturb the quiet of European countries; but the recent "campaign" in Great Britain aroused an excitement among our more intelligent classes which was only less intense than that which was seething in England itself, and here, as there, the interest centred around the stalwart figure of Mr. Gladstone. Here, as in Europe, his splendid triumph was felt to be something more than the victory of one party or "chieftain" over another—a triumph far-reaching in its consequences, and

calculated to "strengthen the friends of pure popular government all over the world."

At the moment when this great career has reached its culminating phase, it has seemed to the author that a concise popular account of its various stages might prove interesting, and could hardly fail to prove instructive. In the following pages the aim has been, not so much to trace with minute precision each successive step, as to furnish material for a fairly accurate general estimate of Mr. Gladstone's varied labors as statesman, orator, and author; and to portray as graphically as we may that noble and opulent personality which lies behind them all.

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WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

At a time when the public everywhere seems to be settling down upon the conviction that there is something in "politics" which tends naturally and inevitably to sear the conscience and blunt the fine edge of personal integrity, it is peculiarly instructive and encouraging to contemplate the career of Mr. Gladstone. In the record of that career we may study the example of a man who from his earliest youth has breathed the atmosphere of politics, and from the dawn of his manhood has lived amid the thickest tumults of party struggle; yet whose purity of motive and elevation of character have never been so much as questioned, who could never be tempted to sacrifice conviction to expediency, whose faith in principles has steadily preserved him from the easy compliances and compromises of ordinary political usage, and whose

conscientiousness is so supreme and extreme that it has sometimes seemed to imperil that clearness of view and promptitude of action which are among the most indispensable qualifications of the administrative statesman. What was said of him by Mr. Kinglake at the period of the Crimean War might be applied with equal truth to the whole of that career which is now drawing toward its honored close : “ If he was famous for the splendor of his eloquence, for his unaffected piety, and for his blameless life, he was celebrated far and wide for a more than common liveliness of conscience. He had once imagined it to be his duty to quit a government, and to burst through long ties of friendship and gratitude, by reason of a thin shade of difference on the subject of white or brown sugar. It was believed that, if he were to commit even a little sin, or to imagine an evil thought, he would instantly arraign himself before the dread tribunal which awaited him within his own bosom; and that, his intellect being subtle and microscopic, he would be likely to give his soul a very harsh trial, and treat himself as a great criminal for faults too minute to be visible to the naked eyes of laymen. His friends live in dread of his virtues, as tending to make him whimsical and unstable, and the practical politicians, perceiving that he was not to be depended upon for party purposes, and was bent upon none but lofty objects, used to look upon him as dangerous—used to call him

behind his back a good man—a good man in the worst sense of the term.” It will be observed that this passage is colored by a sentiment which is not altogether one of admiration—the man who carries conscience into public life is sure to seem “impracticable” to those who are inclined to repudiate its restraints ; but to the general public, we think, the most interesting lesson of Mr. Gladstone’s life is the proof which it affords that sensibility of conscience and disinterestedness of character are not incompatible with a brilliantly successful career in practical politics.

Another aspect of Mr. Gladstone’s career, which renders it peculiarly interesting, is the fact that it summarizes and reflects with unusual fidelity the leading features of that unexampled period of intellectual ferment and changing opinions in the midst of which it has been passed. From being “the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories” of a generation ago (as Macaulay called him at the outset of his career), Mr. Gladstone has traversed the whole vast interval which separated these from the most advanced liberal opinions of our own times, and has become one of the greatest practical reformers whose name has appeared in the annals of British legislation. To trace the gradual steps of this change of opinion and sentiment is to see in operation the most powerful of those intellectual and social forces that are transforming the modern world.

II.

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND EDUCATION.

LANCASHIRE has had the honor of furnishing to the British Parliament the three greatest orators that have shed luster upon its recent annals—Gladstone, Bright, and the late Lord Derby. The greatest of these, WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, was born in Liverpool on the 29th of December, 1809. By his mother's side, according to Sir Bernard Burke, he has in his veins the blood of Henry III of England, and Robert Bruce of Scotland; but he himself has never laid claim to such an august lineage, and has always declared himself proud to be in all respects a representative of that sturdy middle class which has ever constituted the bone and sinew of his country's greatness. Another fact in which he takes pride is that on both sides he is of Scotch descent. Referring to this in 1865, in response to an address from the Parliamentary Reform Union, in the Glasgow Trade Hall, he said: "If Scotland is not ashamed of her sons, her sons are not ashamed of Scotland; and the memory of the parents to whom I owe my being combines, with various other considerations, to make me glad and thankful to remember that the blood which runs in my veins is exclusively Scottish."

The family name, which can be traced back in

legal documents to the year 1621, appears to have undergone several changes in recent times. It was Gledstanes or Gladstanes, until the grandfather of the Liberal statesman, a corn merchant of Leith, changed it to Gladstones, and it was not until 1835 that his father was legally authorized to drop the final letter ; so that Mr. Gladstone was twenty-six years old and a member of Parliament before he was entitled to the name which he has since rendered famous throughout the world.

His father, John Gladstone, removed in early life from Leith to Liverpool, where he became one of the most prosperous and enterprising merchants of the place, extending his commercial operations to all parts of the world. His firm "were among the earliest traders with Russia, and they snatched at the East India trade when the monopoly of the old East India Company was broken down. But their principal business was with the West Indies, where John Gladstone had large sugar plantations—a circumstance which, as we shall see, had a great deal to do with molding the early political career of his illustrious son." It is not the most pleasing feature of English social life that those who have risen to opulence and position by trade are usually ashamed of the fact, and not indisposed to conceal it. Mr. Gladstone, of course, is incapable of any such ignoble sentiment, and in 1872, while Prime Minister of England, took occasion to say (in an ad-

dress delivered at the Liverpool Collegiate Institute) : “I know not why commerce in England should not have its old families, rejoicing to be connected with commerce from generation to generation. It has been so in other countries ; I trust it will be so in this country. I think it a subject of sorrow, and almost of scandal, when those families, who have either acquired or recovered station and wealth through commerce, turn their backs upon it, and seem to be ashamed of it. It certainly is not so with my brother or with me. His sons are treading in his steps, and one of my sons, I rejoice to say, is treading in the steps of my father and my brother.”

Mr. John Gladstone prosecuted his commercial enterprises to such good purpose that he was able to make comfortable provision for each of his seven sons as they came of age ; but he was also remarkable for combining great business ability and zeal with a keen interest in public affairs, and with something of the graces and amenities of literary culture. In the local affairs of Liverpool he took an active and prominent part, and to his efforts much of its ever-increasing prosperity was due. In politics, also, he took an active interest. “When, in 1812,” says Mr. Lucy, “Canning fought a famous election in Liverpool, John Gladstone threw himself heart and soul into the advocacy of the cause of the great minister. He addressed public meetings on his behalf, and it was

from the balcony of his house in Rodney Street that Mr. Canning spoke to the enthusiastic crowd who, as the result of the election, hailed him Member for Liverpool. There was in the house at the time a little boy destined to fill a larger space in history even than Canning. William Ewart Gladstone was in his third year at this time, and doubtless from some upper window looked out with wondering eyes on the turbulent crowd, and heard the Minister talking of Catholic Emancipation and other strange matters. In fact, we have his personal testimony on this interesting point. On the 29th December, 1879, on the occasion of his reaching his seventieth year, Mr. Gladstone received at Hawarden a deputation of Liverpool gentlemen who brought hearty congratulations and a costly present. In the course of his acknowledgment the right honorable gentleman said: 'You have referred to my connection with Liverpool, and it has happened to me singularly enough to have the incidents of my personality, the association of my personality, if I may so speak, curiously divided between the Scotch extraction, which is purely and absolutely Scotch as to every drop of blood in my veins, and, on the other hand, a nativity in Liverpool, which is the scene of my earliest recollections. And very early those recollections are, for I remember, gentlemen, what none of you could possibly recollect: I remember the first election of Mr. Canning in Liverpool.'"

At a later period, owing probably to the influence of Mr. Canning, Mr. John Gladstone presented himself as a candidate for Woodstock, a pocket borough of the Marlborough family ; and subsequently represented Lancaster and other constituencies, being, altogether, a member of the House of Commons for nine years. He was in the House at the same time with his son, and must have listened to many of his earlier efforts in Parliamentary oratory. "In 1845, Sir Robert Peel, partly in recognition of his own merit, but, doubtless, in compliment to the brilliant young colleague who was the bright particular star of his ministry, made the elder Gladstone a baronet. Six years later, in the year of the Great Exhibition, Sir John died, full of years and honors and riches. His title went to Thomas, his eldest son, now the only surviving brother of the subject of this sketch."

During all this period the house of Sir John in Liverpool was a sort of rendezvous for the leaders of his party, and the home-life of the family was deeply tinctured with political thought and feeling. Sir John early discovered the keen intellectual powers of his son, and it is said that before the boy had reached his teens father and son were in the habit of conversing together on the various topics of public interest. The boyhood of William Ewart, like that of William Pitt, was thus passed in the midst of associations which were best calculated to foster and en-

courage the natural development of his special genius.

About the first steps in the future statesman's education very little is known. He probably received his earliest instruction at home and from his parents, and Archdeacon Jones was his first school-master. The most interesting reminiscence of his school-days is preserved in an anecdote told recently by Dean Stanley : "There is a small school near Liverpool," said the Dean, "at which Mr. Gladstone was brought up before he went to Eton. A few years afterward another little boy, who went to this school, and whose name I will not mention, called upon the old clergyman who was the head master. The boy was now a young man, and he said to the old clergyman, 'There is one thing in which I have never in the least degree improved since I was at school—the casting up of figures.' 'Well,' replied the master, 'it is very extraordinary that it should be so, because certainly no one could be a more incapable arithmetician at school than you were ; but I will tell you a curious thing. When Mr. Gladstone was at the school, he was just as incapable at addition and subtraction as you were : now you see what he has become. He is one of the greatest of our financiers.'"

In September, 1821, Mr. Gladstone, then in his twelfth year, was entered at Eton, where he remained for the ensuing six years. It is not re-

corded that he especially distinguished himself in the ordinary work of the school, except that on several occasions he was "sent up for good" on account of verses; but he was one of the founders of, and by far the most copious contributor to, the "Eton Miscellany." Among other contributors to the "Miscellany" were G. A. (afterward Bishop) Selwyn, Arthur Henry Hallam, and F. H. (now Sir Francis Hastings) Doyle; but young Gladstone took the lion's share of the work upon himself, writing with equal facility in prose and verse, translating from the Greek and Latin, indulging in humorous extravagances, and inditing, among other things, a tremendous "heroic" poem of two hundred and fifty lines on Richard Cœur de Lion.

Leaving Eton in 1827, he became the private pupil of Dr. Turner, afterward Bishop of Calcutta, with whom he continued for two years; and in 1829, being then in his twenty-first year, he was sent to Christ Church College, Oxford, where, in 1831, he graduated with the rare honors of a "double first-class"—first-class both in classics and in mathematics. Perhaps the thing by which he proved most during his stay at Oxford was the Debating Society, or Oxford Union, in connection with which we get the most interesting and characteristic glimpses of him at this period. Says Mr. Smith, his most painstaking biographer: "Mr. Gladstone made his first

speech on the 11th of February, 1830, and was the same night elected a member of the committee. The following year he succeeded Mr. Milnes Gaskell in the office of secretary. 'His minutes are neat; proper names are underlined and half printed. As secretary, he opposed a motion for the removal of Jewish disabilities. He also moved that the Wellington administration was undeserving of the country's confidence: Gaskell, Lyall, and Lord Lincoln supported, Sidney Herbert and the Marquis (now Duke) of Abercorn opposed him. The motion was carried by 57 to 56, and the natural exultation of the mover betrayed itself in such irregular entries as "tremendous cheers," "repeated cheering." The following week he was elected president.' Mr. Gladstone spoke in three other debates upon important public questions. In common with the Archbishop of Canterbury, he defended the results of Catholic relief, and, on the occasion of a vote of want of confidence in Earl Grey's government being proposed [on account of the first movement toward Parliamentary Reform], he moved the following rider: 'That the ministry has unwisely introduced, and most unscrupulously forwarded, a measure which threatens not only to change our form of government, but ultimately to break up the very foundation of social order, as well as materially to forward the views of those who are pursuing this project throughout the civilized world.'

These terrible prognostications have been defeated, but the terror engendered in the University by national progress led 94 out of 130 undergraduates to endorse the prophecies of the new Cassandra. Mr. Gladstone closed his career at the Oxford Union by proposing an amendment to a motion for the immediate emancipation of our slaves in the West Indies. This was on June 2, 1831, and the young orator's amendment ran as follows: 'That legislative enactments ought to be made, and, if necessary, to be enforced—1st, for better guarding the personal and civil rights of the negroes in our West Indian colonies; 2d, for establishing compulsory manumission; 3d, for securing universally the receiving of a Christian education, under the clergy and teachers, independent of the planters; a measure of which total but gradual emancipation will be the natural consequence, as it was of a similar procedure in the first ages of Christianity.'"

Read in the light of his later opinions, and of the acts which have secured his fame as a statesman, these records are very curious. Home influences, together with that peculiar fascination which the name and personality of Canning seem always to have possessed for him, had early imbued the youthful Gladstone with Tory sentiments of the most rigid and bigoted type; and these sentiments were confirmed and strengthened by his University career, the traditions of

Oxford being all in that direction, while the collegians with whom he was more intimately associated were for the most part both Tories and High Churchmen. Summing up at a much later period (in a speech delivered at the opening of the Palmerston Club, Oxford, in December, 1878) the general effect of his University training, Mr. Gladstone said :

"I trace in the education of Oxford of my own time one great defect. Perhaps it was my own fault; but I must admit that I did not learn, when at Oxford, that which I have learned since, viz., to set a due value on the imperishable and the inestimable principles of human liberty. The temper which, I think, too much prevailed in academic circles was, that liberty was regarded with jealousy, and fear could not be wholly dispensed with. . . . I think that the principle of the Conservative party is jealousy of liberty and of the people, only qualified by fear; but I think the policy of the Liberal party is trust in the people, only qualified by prudence. I can only assure you, gentlemen, that, now I am in front of extended popular privileges, I have no fear of those enlargements of the constitution that seem to be approaching. On the contrary, I hail them with desire. I am not in the least degree conscious that I have less reverence for antiquity, for the beautiful, and good, and glorious charges that our ancestors have handed down to us as a patrimony to our race, than I had in other days when I held other political opinions. I have learned to set the true value upon human liberty, and in whatever I have changed, there, and there only, has been the explanation of the change."

On the completion of his University course Mr. Gladstone spent a short time at home, and then proceeded to the Continent for travel and recreation, spending several months in Italy, whence he was hastily recalled by an offer of a seat in the House of Commons.

III.

IN PARLIAMENT.

“MR. GLADSTONE,” says Mr. Lucy, “was in Italy when the summons came in obedience to which he placed his foot on the first rung in the ladder of fame. It was in the year 1832. The Reform Bill had just been passed, and the United Kingdom was in the throes of expectation as to what might follow on the summoning of the first Reform Parliament. It was the Duke of Newcastle, registered owner of the borough of Newark, who was immediately instrumental in bringing Mr. Gladstone into the House of Commons. In a conversation which took place upon the hustings on the day of nomination, there is something eminently characteristic of Mr. Gladstone as we know him in these days. A matter-of-fact elector, who probably did not rent his house or shop from the Duke, asked the young candidate,

‘Whether he was not the Duke of Newcastle’s nominee?’ This was an exceedingly embarrassing question. If the candidate said ‘No,’ he would be convicted, within every man’s knowledge, of a falsehood. If he said ‘Yes,’ what a farce was this nomination and bustle at the poll! But Mr. Gladstone, though an exceedingly young bird at this date, was not to be caught by chaff. He asked the honorable elector to do him the favor of defining the term nominee. The unwary elector fell into the trap, and Mr. Gladstone was, of course, able to declare that in such a sense he was *not* the Duke’s nominee.* As a matter of fact he certainly was, and the preponderance of the Duke’s influence was indicated by his being returned at the head of the poll.”

*The question and answer were as follows, as reported in one of the local journals :

“Mr. Gillson inquired of Mr. Gladstone how he came to Newark, after he had neglected to attend a meeting of the electors to which he was invited, and whether he was not the Duke of Newcastle’s nominee.

“Mr. Gladstone wished to have Mr. Gillson’s definition of the term ‘nominee,’ and then he would answer.

“Mr. Gillson said he meant a person sent by the Duke of Newcastle to be pushed down the electors’ throats, whether they would or not.

“Mr. Gladstone replied, then, according to that definition, he was not a nominee. He came to Newark by the invitation of the Red Club, than whom none were more respectable and intelligent. The Club sent to the Duke of Newcastle to know if he could recommend a candidate to them, and in consequence

A further proof that he was the Duke's nominee is to be found in the fact that when, several years later, Mr. Gladstone had resolved to support Sir Robert Peel's free-trade policy, he felt obliged to resign his seat for Newark solely because the Duke of Newcastle was opposed to that policy ; but this only fortifies the one strong argument in favor of pocket or nomination boroughs, namely, that they gave the opportunity for introducing into the House of Commons young men of promise, who would never have secured such an advantage on their own merits alone. It will be remembered that Macaulay was introduced in the same way by Lord Lansdowne ; and certainly, if no worse abuses were connected with pocket boroughs than furnishing opportunities to such young men as Macaulay and Gladstone, there would have been very little to say against them.

In spite of the support of the Duke, however, the youthful candidate encountered vigorous opposition, and was subjected by one of the local journals to the following sharp criticism, which is particularly interesting, in view of the fact that the object of it was destined to equip the voters with that very ballot which is here appealed to against him : "Mr. Gladstone is the son of Gladstone, of Liverpool, a person who (we are he was appealed to, and accepted the invitation of the Red Club."

speaking of the father) had amassed a large fortune by West India dealings. In other words, a great part of his gold has sprung from the blood of black slaves. Respecting the youth himself—a person fresh from college, and whose mind is as much like a sheet of white foolscap as possible—he was utterly unknown. He came recommended by no claim in the world *except the will of the Duke*. The Duke nodded unto Newark, and Newark sent back the man, or rather the boy, of his choice. What! Is this to be, now that the Reform Bill has done its work? Are sixteen hundred men still to bow down to a wooden-headed lord, as the people of Egypt used to do to their beasts, to their reptiles, and their ropes of onions? There must be something wrong—something imperfect. What is it? What is wanting? Why, the ballot! If there be a doubt of this (and we believe there is a doubt even among intelligent men), the tale of Newark must set the question at rest. Serjeant Wilde was met on his entry into the town by almost the whole population. He was greeted everywhere, cheered everywhere. He was received with delight by his friends, and with good and earnest wishes for his success by his nominal foes. The voters for Gladstone went up to that candidate's booth (the slave-driver, as they called him) with Wilde's colors. People who had before voted for Wilde, on being asked to give up their suffrage,

said : ' We can not, we dare not. We have lost half our business, and shall lose the rest if we go against the Duke. We would do anything in our power for Serjeant Wilde, and for the cause, but we can not starve ! ' Now, what say ye, our merry men, touching the ballot ? "

On the other hand, his personal appearance was very much in his favor, and the speeches he delivered made such an impression that another journalist " ventures to predict, without the slightest exaggeration, that he will one day be classed amongst the most able statesmen in the British senate. " But the most interesting feature of the contest was the " Election Address, " which is Mr. Gladstone's first authentic public utterance, and which is worth preserving as the starting-point of that great career which has since swept so widely away from the principles and sentiments therein laid down. The document is dated " Clinton Arms, Newark, October 9, 1832, " is inscribed " To the worthy and independent electors of the Borough of Newark, " and is as follows :

" Having now completed my canvass, I think it my duty as well to remind you of the principles on which I have solicited your votes, as freely to assure my friends that its result has placed my success beyond a doubt.

" I have not requested your favor on the ground of adherence to the opinions of any man or party, further than such adherence can be fairly understood from the

conviction I have not hesitated to avow, that we must watch and resist that uninquiring and indiscriminating desire for change among us, which threatens to produce, along with partial good, a melancholy preponderance of mischief; which, I am persuaded, would aggravate beyond computation the deep-seated evils of our social state, and the heavy burdens of our industrial classes; which, by disturbing our peace, destroys confidence, and strikes at the root of prosperity. Thus it *has done already*; and thus, we must therefore believe, it *will do*.

“For the mitigation of those evils, we must, I think, look not only to particular measures, but to the restoration of sounder general principles. I mean especially that principle on which alone the incorporation of religion with the State in our constitution can be defended; that the duties of governors are strictly and peculiarly religious; and that legislatures, like individuals, are bound to carry throughout their acts the spirit of the high truths they have acknowledged. Principles are now arrayed against our institutions; and not by truckling nor by temporizing—not by oppression nor corruption—but by principles, they must be met.

“Among their first results should be a sedulous and special attention to the interest of the poor, founded upon the rule that those who are the least able to take care of themselves should be most regarded by others. Particularly it is a duty to endeavor, by every means, that *labor may receive adequate remuneration*; which, unhappily, among several classes of our fellow countrymen is not now the case. Whatever measures therefore—whether by correction of the poor laws, allotment of cottage grounds, or otherwise—tend to promote this object, I deem entitled to the warmest support, with all

such as are calculated to secure sound moral conduct in any class of society.

“I proceed to the momentous question of slavery, which I have found entertained among you in that candid and temperate spirit which alone befits its nature, or promises to remove its difficulties. If I have not recognized the right of an irresponsible society to interpose between me and the electors, it has not been from any disrespect to its members, nor from unwillingness to answer theirs or any other questions on which the electors may desire to know my views. To the esteemed secretary of the society I submitted my reasons for silence; and I made a point of stating these views to him, in his character of a voter.

“As regards the abstract lawfulness of slavery, I acknowledge it simply as importing the right of one man to the labor of another; and I rest it upon the fact that Scripture, the paramount authority upon such a point, gives directions to persons standing in the relation of master to slave, for their conduct in that direction; whereas, were the matter absolutely and necessarily *sinful*, it would not regulate the manner. Assuming sin as the cause of degradation, it strives, and strives most effectually, to cure the latter by extirpating the former. We are agreed that both the physical and the moral bondage of the slave are to be abolished. The question is as to the *order*, and the order only; now Scripture attacks the moral evil *before* the temporal one, and the temporal *through* the moral one, and I am content with the order which Scripture has established.

“To this end, I desire to see immediately set on foot, by impartial and sovereign authority, a universal

and efficient system of Christian instruction, not intended to resist designs of individual piety and wisdom for the religious improvement of the negroes, but to do thoroughly what they can only do partially.

“As regards immediate emancipation, whether with or without compensation, there are several minor reasons against it; but that which weighs with me is that it would, I much fear, exchange the evils now affecting the negro for others which are weightier—for a relapse into deeper debasement, if not for bloodshed and internal war. Let *fitness* be made a condition for emancipation; and let us strive to bring him to that fitness by the shortest possible course. Let him enjoy the means of earning his freedom through honest and industrious habits; thus the same instruments which attain his liberty shall likewise render him competent to use it; and thus, I earnestly trust, without risk of blood, without violation of property, with unimpaired benefit to the negro, and with the utmost speed which prudence will admit, we shall arrive at that exceedingly desirable consummation, the utter extinction of slavery.

“And now, gentlemen, as regards the enthusiasm with which you have rallied round your ancient flag, and welcomed the humble representative of those principles whose emblem it is, I trust that neither the lapse of time nor the seductions of prosperity can ever efface it from my memory. To my opponents, my acknowledgments are due for the good-humor and kindness with which they have received me; and, while I would thank my friends for their zealous and unwearied exertions in my favor, I briefly but emphatically assure them that, if promises be an adequate foundation of confidence, or

experience a reasonable ground of calculation, our victory *is sure*.

“I have the honor to be, gentlemen,

“Your obliged and obedient servant,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

As has already been said, the result of the contest was that Mr. Gladstone came out at the head of the poll ; and thus, at the age of twenty-three, he found himself in that position to which he had begun to aspire when, as a youth of seventeen, he was writing for the “Eton Miscellany,” and avowing Canning to be his ideal of a statesman.

The first Reform Parliament met in January, 1833, and the young member from Newark quietly entered upon the scene where for nearly fifty years he has played so conspicuous a part. In his maiden speech, as in every other particular of his career, he differed as widely as possible from the great rival whose persistent efforts to obtain entrance to the House of Commons had hitherto failed, and whose melodramatic and pretentious “first speech” at a later period invited the mortifying failure which it achieved. Mr. Gladstone’s maiden speech was not delivered in the course of a great debate, but upon a sort of side issue, and, in fact, in defense of his father, to whom personal reference had been made in the course of a discussion on the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. It was modest and argumentative, adhering closely to facts, and making small attempt

at oratorical display ; and it produced so favorable an impression upon the House that he was listened to respectfully whenever he rose thereafter. Mr. Justin McCarthy says that “he was from the very first recognized as a brilliant debater, and as one who promised to be an orator” ; but this hardly applies to his very earliest efforts, when he was testing, as it were, the quality of his instruments, and catching the tone of the House.

Once again during this first session Mr. Gladstone spoke on the question of the abolition of slavery. His father owned many slaves in Demerara, and to denounce the institution of slavery was, in a sense, to impugn his father’s humanity ; and Mr. Gladstone seems to have been somewhat hampered by this complication of affairs. Still, his attitude was not one of unqualified hostility to emancipation. He thought that emancipation should be gradual, and should be carefully prepared for ; and he demanded, above all, that the interests of the planters should be duly regarded. The House agreed with him in part, for the abolition of colonial slavery was decreed, and the sum of £20,000,000 was voted to the slave-owners as compensation for their losses.

Nothing could well be more dreary than a minute record of debates and divisions—of those factitious struggles where, as Mr. Carlyle says, “Hungry Greek meets hungry Greek on the floor of St. Stephen’s, and wrestles with him and throt-

bles him until he has to cry, 'Hold ! the office is thine'"; and it is not our intention to do more than mention the salient questions in which Mr. Gladstone has taken part, and which form landmarks in his political career. It is always difficult to detach the personal biography of a statesman from the history of his times, and perhaps more difficult still to combine them into a satisfactory whole. This is the reason, possibly, why lives of public men are nearly always either dull and prosy or sketchy and inadequate ; but, as our space is strictly limited, we shall endeavor to escape dullness by avoiding details, and must content ourselves with stating results.

In his first session, besides resisting the abolition of slavery, Mr. Gladstone delivered a speech in defense of "that estimable body of politicians, the Freemen of Liverpool, who were threatened with extinction consequent upon a too open exercise of their alleged right to do what they liked with their own—that is to say, to get as much as possible for their votes." The House did not accept his defense as adequate, and he was also unsuccessful in resisting an attempt to deal with the temporalities of the Church of Ireland, and in opposing Mr. Hume in his effort to open the universities to Nonconformists.

Though, generally speaking, on the losing side and voting in the minority, before the close of the session Mr. Gladstone had convinced the House,

and especially the Tory portion of it, that he was emphatically one of its coming men, and had manifested that remarkable skill in dealing with facts and figures that has ever since been one of his most striking characteristics. Recognition of this came sooner than could reasonably have been expected. "Sir Robert Peel had quietly noted the young member for Newark, and when, in the last days of 1834, the Right Hon. Baronet undertook to form a ministry in succession to that of Lord Melbourne, he offered Mr. Gladstone the post of Junior Lord of the Treasury. This was a tolerable success for a young man in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and at the close of his second parliamentary session. But it was the prelude to even more rapid advancement. Parliament had scarcely met for the session of 1835 when he was installed in the office of Under-Secretary for the Colonies, and lost no time in bringing in his first bill—a measure designed to improve the condition of passengers in merchant vessels. The ministry was, however, too short-lived for this humble effort to be added to the accomplishments of the statute-book. Mr. Gladstone's young hopes received a temporary blow from contact with the question of the Irish Church, which has exercised so important an influence on later stages of his career. It was on a resolution containing the nucleus of the Irish Church bill of 1869 that the first ministry of

which he formed a member was defeated, and forced to resign."

In his speech on this resolution Mr. Gladstone declared that the system involved in the Church of Ireland involved the existence of all Church establishments, and added: "If in the administration of this great country the elements of religion should not enter—if those who were called upon to guide it in its career should be forced to listen to the caprices and to the whims of every body of visionaries, they would lose that station all great men were hitherto proud of. He hoped that he should never live to see the day when any principle leading to such a result would be adopted in this country."

During the next five or six years Mr. Gladstone was in Opposition; but, whether in office or out, his reputation steadily increased, and he gradually became recognized as the ablest lieutenant of Sir Robert Peel, the great Conservative chief. He spoke frequently in debates, and the growth of his position in the country as well as in Parliament is testified to by the fact that in 1837, when only in his twenty-eighth year, he was invited to stand as the Tory candidate for the great city of Manchester. He declined, having already pledged himself to Newark, and not being disposed to give up a safe seat for a highly uncertain one; but he was run, nevertheless, and polled such an unexpectedly large num-

ber of votes as to show unmistakably his great popularity.

In the following Parliament, which was the first of Queen Victoria (1838), there being another stormy revival of the anti-slavery agitation, Mr. Gladstone delivered a long and powerful speech on negro apprenticeship in the West-Indies, which, though on the unpopular side of the question, confessedly lifted him to the front rank of Parliamentary orators. In this year, also, Mr. Gladstone issued his first published work, "The State in its Relations with the Church," in a review of which in the "Edinburgh Review" Macaulay described its author in a famous sentence as "a young man of unblemished character, and of distinguished Parliamentary talents, the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories who follow reluctantly and mutinously a leader whose experience and eloquence are indispensable to them, but whose cautious temper and moderate opinions they abhor." According to Macaulay, the theory of the book is based upon the proposition that the propagation of religious truth is one of the chief ends of government; and one of its doctrines which he confutes with especial warmth is the principle which, as he states it, "would give the Irish a Protestant Church, whether they like it or not." It is a curious fact that the author of the book which contained this doctrine was the author of

the disestablishment of the State Church in Ireland.

Mr. Gladstone's essay passed rapidly through several editions, and in 1840 he followed it up with another work on a subject nearly related thereto, entitled "Church Principles Considered in their Results," the object of which "was to present a familiar or partial representation of the moral characteristics and effects of those doctrines which are now, more than ever, felt in the English Church to be full of intrinsic value, and which likewise appear to have much special adaptation to the circumstances of the time." Still another work, written at a much later period, but requiring to be considered along with these early ecclesiastical writings, is "A Chapter of Autobiography." This latter was published in 1868, and attempts to explain the reasons for that great change of opinion which led the author of "The State in its Relations with the Church" to take the leading part in destroying the fabric of the Irish Church. It is what it professes to be, a genuine chapter of autobiography; and it should be read by all who would understand Mr. Gladstone's character and the inmost workings of his mind.

The first treatise was "inscribed to the University of Oxford; tried and not found wanting through the vicissitudes of a thousand years; in the belief that she is providentially designed to be a fountain of blessings, spiritual, social, and

intellectual, to this and to other countries, to the present and future times; and in the hope that the temper of these pages may be found not alien from her own." Both the compliment and the tract were highly acceptable to Oxford, and she did not forget either when, eight years later, a change in the political relations of the member for Newark necessitated his looking for another seat.

"In other directions than that of literature and the Church," says Mr. Lucy, "the rising hope of the stern unbending Tories justified the description of the Edinburgh reviewer. We find him at this period lending the weight of his eloquence and the force of his genius to stopping the progress of Reform in whatever direction it was urged. He opposed a ministerial scheme for dealing with the Church rates in deference to the views of Dissenters. He passionately defended negro apprenticeship, the last vestige of slavery permitted in the West Indies. He opposed a scheme of national education in which, as Lord Morpeth put it, 'it was declared to be the duty of the State to provide education for Dissenters so long as it fingered their gold,' and he fought hard in the long battle against the bill designed to remove the civil disabilities of Jews. He was always thorough, and, being in these days of partially developed intelligence a Tory, he was, to borrow a phrase of Dick Swiveller's friend the Marchioness, 'a nout-an'-nouter.'"

Mr. Gladstone being now launched on the full tide of Parliamentary success, the reader will probably be glad to obtain a closer and more personal view of him at this period ; and fortunately the material is at hand. In a little book entitled "The British Senate in 1838," the author, among many other piquant personal descriptions of eminent men, sketches the following portrait of "the most rising young man on the Tory side of the House" :

"Mr. Gladstone's appearance and manners are much in his favor. He is a fine-looking man. He is about the usual height, and of good figure. His countenance is mild and pleasant, and has a highly intellectual expression. His eyes are clear and quick. His eyebrows are dark and rather prominent. There is not a dandy in the House but envies what Truefit would call his 'fine head of jet-black hair.' It is always carefully parted from the crown downward to his brow, where it is tastefully shaded. His features are small and regular, and his complexion must be a very unworthy witness if he does not possess an abundant stock of health.

"Mr. Gladstone's gesture is varied, but not violent. When he rises he generally puts both his hands behind his back ; and having there suffered them to embrace each other for a short time, he unclasps them, and allows them to drop on either side. They are not permitted to remain

long in that locality before you see them again closed together and hanging down before him. Their reunion is not suffered to last for any length of time. Again a separation takes place, and now the right hand is seen moving up and down before him. Having thus exercised it a little, he thrusts it into the pocket of his coat, and then orders the left hand to follow its example. Having granted them a momentary repose there, they are again put into gentle motion; and in a few seconds they are seen reposing *vis-à-vis* on his breast. He moves his face and body from one direction to another, not forgetting to bestow a liberal share of his attention on his own party. He is always listened to with much attention by the House, and appears to be highly respected by men of all parties. He is a man of good business habits; of this he furnished abundant proof when Under-Secretary for the Colonies, during the short-lived administration of Sir Robert Peel. . . .

“He is well informed on most of the subjects which usually occupy the attention of the Legislature; and he is happy in turning his information to good account. He is ready on all occasions which he deems fitting ones with a speech in favor of the policy advocated by the party with whom he acts. His extempore resources are ample. Few men in the House can improvise better. It does not appear to cost him an effort to speak. . . . His style is polished, but has no appearance

of the effect of previous preparation. He displays considerable acuteness in replying to an opponent ; he is quick in his perception of anything vulnerable in the speech to which he replies, and happy in laying the weak point bare to the gaze of the House. He now and then indulges in sarcasm, which is, in most cases, very felicitous. He is plausible even when most in error. When it suits himself or his party, he can apply himself with the strictest closeness to the real point at issue ; when to evade the point is deemed most politic, no man can wander from it more widely."

Another writer tells us that during his first years in Parliament he was known as "handsome Gladstone," and was often pointed out as the best-looking young man in the House. At the time of his second election for Newark, one of the local journals declared him to be "not more remarkable for his extraordinary talents than for his amiable manners." And Mr. Smith says : "The field of politics was at this time conspicuous for the bitterness of its encounters, but Mr. Gladstone held himself aloof from mere gladiatorial exhibitions, and earned the respect of the whole House by his courteous bearing and the general urbanity of his manners." Yet he was a very fervid speaker. Even in his early days at the Oxford Union, we are assured that the earnestness and intensity of his language and bear-

ing were sometimes painful; "conviction was stamped on every word he uttered."

To this period also belongs a domestic occurrence which, together with other personal matters, may conveniently be mentioned here. Says Mr. Smith: "In the month of July, 1839, Mr. Gladstone was married to a lady who is almost as distinguished for her many benevolent and social qualities as Mr. Gladstone is in political and public life. The name of Mrs. Gladstone is widely known as that of a practical philanthropist, while to Mr. Gladstone himself—we may, perhaps, be pardoned for saying—she has ever been that interested sharer in his triumphs and consoler in his defeats which the late Viscountess Beaconsfield was to his Parliamentary rival. Mrs. Gladstone was Miss Catherine Glynne, daughter of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, of Hawarden Castle, Flintshire. Their union has been blessed by eight children, all of whom, save one, still survive. Of the four sons, the eldest, William Henry, is a member of the Legislature, and the second, the Rev. Stephen Edward Gladstone, is rector of Hawarden. The third and fourth sons are named Henry Neville and Herbert John Gladstone respectively. The former pursues a commercial career. Mr. Gladstone's eldest daughter, Anne, is married to the Rev. E. C. Wickham, M. A., head-master of Wellington College; the second daughter, Miss Catherine Jessy Gladstone, died in 1850. Two other

daughters still survive, in addition to Mrs. Wickham, viz., the Misses Mary and Helen Gladstone. As Sir John Gladstone had the pleasure of seeing his son William Ewart a member of the same Senate with himself, so Mr. Gladstone has witnessed his eldest son in turn take his seat in the House of Commons as member for Whitby. Mrs. Gladstone's sister, Miss Mary Glynne, became the wife of Lord Lyttelton, with whom Mr. Gladstone was on terms of the most intimate friendship until his lordship's untoward and lamented death."

IV.

IN AND OUT OF OFFICE.

FOR several years previous to 1841 the Whig ministry had been growing unpopular, and in June of that year was defeated by a small majority on a motion of want of confidence. Instead of resigning, Lord John Russell, the Whig leader, dissolved Parliament and appealed to the constituencies; but the result of a general election was the return of a heavy Tory majority, and the consequent accession to power of Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Gladstone was again returned for Newark at the head of the poll, and in the new ministry received the dual appointments of Vice-President

of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint. It was said at the time that he was given two laborious offices in order, if possible, to keep him quiet, and, by giving him too much to do, to prevent him from troubling himself about the Church. If that was the object, it was certainly effective, for a time at least, for Mr. Gladstone was soon absorbed in his official and Parliamentary work, and for many years his theological disquisitions were suspended.

It was during the session of 1842 that Sir Robert Peel brought forward his new sliding scale of Corn Duties. He proposed that a duty of twenty shillings should be levied when wheat was at fifty-one shillings per quarter, to descend to one shilling when the price was seventy-three, with rests at intermediate prices, intended to diminish the possibility of tampering with the averages. The measure was vigorously assailed by Lord John Russell and as vigorously defended by Mr. Gladstone, who said in the course of his speech that, "between the opposite extremes of those who thought with the Anti-Corn-Law Convention, and those who thought with the Agricultural Association of Boston, he believed that the measure of the Government was a fair medium ; and that it would give relief to consumers, steadiness to prices, and increase to foreign trade, and a general improvement to the condition of the country." It is noteworthy that at this

period a motion brought forward by Mr. Villiers for the immediate repeal of the Corn Laws was defeated by the enormous majority of 393 to 90.

“The second branch of the financial plan of the Government,” says Mr. Smith, “the revised Tariff or Customs Duties scheme, was a formidable undertaking. Though brought into the House by the Prime Minister, it was understood to be almost wholly the work of his able lieutenant, Mr. Gladstone. Out of some twelve hundred duty-paying articles, a total abolition, or a considerable reduction, took place in no fewer than seven hundred and fifty of such articles. Sir Robert Peel’s boast, that he had endeavored to relieve manufacturing industry, was more than justified by this great and comprehensive measure. He had acknowledged, amid loud cheers from the opposition, that all were agreed in the general rule that we should purchase in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest ; but he added, ‘If I proposed a greater change in the Corn Laws than that which I submit to the consideration of the House, I should only aggravate the distress of the country, and only increase the alarm which prevails among important interests.’ Mr. Hume, however, hailed with joy the appearance of the Premier and his colleagues as converts to the principles of Free Trade. Mr. Gladstone replied that, though it was not worth while now to discuss

who were the authors of the principles on which the Government measure was founded, he must enter his protest against the statement that the ministry came forward as converts to principles which they had formerly opposed. The late Government had certainly done very little for the principles of commercial relaxation.

“Again and again, during the progress of the Tariffs Bill, was Mr. Gladstone called upon to defend the details of the Government scheme. Something was said upon almost every article of consumption included in or excluded from the plan; but it was admitted on all hands that great fiscal reforms had been conceived and executed. No measure with which Mr. Gladstone’s name has since been connected more fully attested his mastery over detail, his power of comprehending the commercial interests of the country, or his capacity as a practical statesman in suggesting the best means for relieving the manufacturing industries of their burdens, than the revised Tariff scheme of 1842. Some idea of the strain involved upon him during this session may be gathered from the fact that Hansard records he rose to his feet no fewer than one hundred and twenty-nine times, in connection with measures before the House, but chiefly touching the provisions of the Tariff bill.”

Harriet Martineau, a writer by no means partial to the Tories, says of the session of 1842 (in

her "History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace") : "The nation saw and felt that its business was understood and accomplished, and the House of Commons was no longer like a sleeper under a nightmare. The long session was a busy one. The Queen wore a cheerful air when she thanked her Parliament for their effectual labors. The opposition was such as could no longer impede the operations of the next session. The condition of the country was fearful enough ; but something was done for its future improvement, and the way was now shown to be open for further beneficent legislation."

The condition of the country did not improve during the recess, and the growing distress nerved the Corn-Law reformers to renewed efforts. At the very beginning of the session of 1843 Lord Howick called for a committee of the whole House to consider the reference in the Queen's Speech to the long-continued depression of manufacturing industry. This was regarded as an indirect blow at the Corn Laws, and was energetically and successfully opposed both by Mr. Gladstone and by Sir Robert Peel. Twice again during the session the same question was raised, and as often defeated by large majorities, though signs were not wanting that both of the great political parties were tending toward a relaxation of their more rigid Protectionist doctrines.

In this year (1843) Mr. Gladstone succeeded

the Earl of Ripon as President of the Board of Trade, and, in this capacity, carried, among other measures, an important bill controlling the then young domestic institution of railways. "Since the year 1843," says Mr. Lucy, "Mr. Gladstone has done so much for the people that his comparatively minor achievements are lost sight of. It is, nevertheless, interesting to recall the fact that he was the author of the Parliamentary train which travels the full length of all lines twice a day at a fare of one penny a mile—perhaps a more useful work than his essay on 'The State in its Relations with the Church,' or even his pamphlet on 'Vaticanism.'"

During the session of 1844 Mr. Gladstone was very busy with the duties of his department, and took a leading part in all the important debates; but scarcely had Parliament met in 1845 when it became known that he had resigned his post in the ministry. This step was due to scruples of conscience about Sir Robert Peel's measure for increasing the endowment of Maynooth College, an Irish Catholic institution, and for the establishment of "Godless colleges" in Ireland. Referring to it, in his "History of Our Own Times," Mr. Justin McCarthy says: "He acted, perhaps, with a too sensitive chivalry. He had written a work, as all the world knows, on the relations of Church and State, and he did not think the views expressed in that book left him free to coöperate

in the ministerial measure. Some staid politicians were shocked ; many more smiled ; not a few sneered. The public in general applauded the disinterestedness which dictated the young statesman's act."

In his speech explaining the motives of his resignation, Mr. Gladstone said : "I am sensible how fallible my judgment is, and how easily I might have erred ; but still it has been my conviction that although I was not to fetter my judgment as a member of Parliament by a reference to abstract theories, yet, on the other hand, it was absolutely due to the public and due to myself that I should, so far as in me lay, place myself in a position to form an opinion upon a matter of so great importance, that should not only be actually free from all bias or leaning with respect to any consideration whatsoever, but an opinion that should be unsuspected. On that account, I have taken a course most painful to myself in respect to personal feelings, and have separated myself from men with whom, and under whom, I have long acted in public life, and of whom I am bound to say—although I have now no longer the honor of serving my most gracious Sovereign—that I continue to regard them with unaltered sentiments both of public regard and private attachment." Mr. Gladstone added that he was not prepared to war against the religious measures of his friend, Sir Robert Peel. He would not pre-

judge such questions, but would give to them calm and deliberate consideration. A high tribute was paid to the retiring minister, both by Lord John Russell and the Premier. The latter avowed the highest respect and admiration for Mr. Gladstone's character and abilities; admiration only equaled by regard for his private character. He had been most unwilling to lose one whom he regarded as capable of the highest and most eminent services. By an act of strict conscientiousness, Mr. Gladstone thus severed himself from a ministry in which he had rapidly risen to power and influence. His motives were appreciated by men of all parties, and it was generally predicted that one so useful to the State could not long remain in the position of a private member.

Nor was the fulfillment of the prediction long delayed. "Famine had forced Peel's hand"; and in December, 1845, the "Times" announced that Parliament would be summoned for the first week in January, and that the Royal Speech would recommend an immediate consideration of the Corn Laws, preparatory to their total repeal. "Few chapters of political history in modern times," says Mr. McCarthy, "have given rise to more controversy than that which contains the story of Sir Robert Peel's administration in its dealing with the Corn Laws. Told in the briefest form, the story is that Peel came into office in 1841 to maintain the Corn Laws, and that in 1846

he repealed them. The controversy as to the wisdom or unwisdom of repealing the Corn Laws has long since come to an end. They who were the uncompromising opponents of Free Trade at that time are proud to call themselves its uncompromising zealots now. Indeed, there is no more chance of a reaction against Free Trade in England than there is of a reaction against the rule of three. But the controversy still exists, and will probably always be in dispute, as to the conduct of Sir Robert Peel. . . . Sir Robert Peel's government came into power distinctly pledged to uphold the principle of protection for home-grown grain. Four years after this, Sir Robert Peel proposed the total abolition of the corn duties. For this he was denounced by some members of his party in language more fierce and unmeasured than ever since has been applied to any leading statesman. Mr. Gladstone was never assailed by the staunchest supporter of the Irish Church in words so vituperative as those which rated Sir Robert Peel for his supposed apostasy. One eminent person, at least [Mr. Disraeli], made his first fame as a Parliamentary orator by his denunciations of the great minister whom he had previously eulogized and supported."

The first result of Sir Robert Peel's announcement was a rupture of his Cabinet and the secession of several of its leading members ; in consequence of which, Sir Robert tendered his resignation to

her Majesty. Lord John Russell, the Whig leader, was accordingly summoned to form a ministry ; but, failing in this, the Queen requested Sir Robert to withdraw his resignation. He reluctantly resumed office, and, when his reconstructed Cabinet was made known, it was found that Mr. Gladstone had succeeded Lord Stanley as Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Of course, in accepting office under these circumstances, Mr. Gladstone pledged himself to go the full length of Peel's Free-Trade policy ; and Mr. Smith says : "It is no secret that the most advanced statesman on the Free-Trade question in the Peel Cabinet was Mr. Gladstone. The policy of the Government in regard to the great measure of 1846 was largely molded by him, and his representations of the effects of Free Trade on the industry of the country and the general well-being of the people strengthened the Premier in his resolve to sweep away the obnoxious corn laws. The pamphlet * on recent commercial legislation had prepared the way for the later momentous changes ; and to Mr. Gladstone is due much of the credit for the speedy consummation of the Free-Trade policy of the Peel ministry. In the official sphere he may be regarded, perhaps, as the leading pioneer of the movement."

* While out of office Mr. Gladstone had published a pamphlet entitled "Remarks upon Recent Commercial Legislation."

In view of this it is a remarkable and regrettable fact that, during the session in which the great measure was debated and carried, Mr. Gladstone was without a seat in Parliament. The Duke of Newcastle, under whose patronage he had secured and held the seat for Newark, being a rigid Protectionist and a bitter opponent of the new policy, he felt that he could not continue to represent the borough without loss of dignity, and accordingly resigned. When he returned in 1847 as Member for Oxford University, the Corn Law Repeal Act was passed; Sir Robert Peel, having accomplished his great work, and thereby alienated many of his supporters, was relegated to the Opposition benches; and the Whigs were enjoying a new lease of power.

The first important debate in which Mr. Gladstone took part after his return was significant as indicating his growing liberality of opinion. In 1841 he had crossed swords with Macaulay in opposing the Jews Civil Disabilities Removal bill; but, when in the general election of 1847 Baron Rothschild was returned for the city of London, and Lord John Russell proposed to enable him to take his seat by passing a bill affirming the eligibility of Jews to all offices to which Roman Catholics were admissible by law, he supported the measure in a forcible and convincing speech. Explaining that, when he opposed the last law for the removal of Jewish disabilities, he had foreseen that, if we

gave the Jew municipal, magisterial, and executive functions, we could not refuse him legislative functions any longer, he continued : “The Jew was refused entrance into that House, because he would then be a maker of the laws ; but who made the maker of the law ? The constituencies ; and into these constituencies we had admitted the Jews. Now, were the constituencies Christian constituencies ? If they were, was it probable that the Parliament would cease to be a Christian Parliament ?” He concluded by saying, “that he was of opinion that, if they admitted Jews into Parliament, prejudice might be awakened for a while, but the good sense of the people would soon allay it, and members would have the consolation of knowing that in a case of difficulty they had yielded to a sense of justice, and by so doing had not disparaged religion nor lowered Christianity, but had rather elevated both in all reflecting and well-regulated minds.”

During the next two or three sessions Mr. Gladstone played the ordinary part of an active and vigilant member of the Opposition, participating in most of the principal debates, defending the commercial policy inaugurated by Sir Robert Peel, and increasing his reputation both in the House and in the country. The most memorable debate of this period occurred during the session of 1850, and as his share of it Mr. Gladstone delivered the finest and most powerful speech that

he had yet made in Parliament—one which was recognized as fully entitled to rank with the remarkable orations of Lord Palmerston, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Cobden, and Mr. Disraeli. The debate arose out of the affairs of Greece. The Greek Government having refused certain demands for compensation which the English Government had made on behalf of certain English subjects, Admiral Sir William Parker was ordered to proceed to Athens, for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction. Failing in this, the Admiral blockaded the Piræus. “The news of this somewhat high-handed proceeding produced dissatisfaction in certain quarters in England, the policy being condemned as unworthy of the dignity, and discreditable to the reputation, of a power like Great Britain. The debates in both Houses initiated upon this Greek question took a wider scope than the facts just enumerated, and eventually included our relations with France. The stability of the Whig administration depended upon the results of the discussions.” Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Minister, whose policy was thus assailed, defended himself energetically in a speech of nearly five hours’ duration. “At its close he challenged the verdict of the House whether the principles which had guided the foreign policy of her Majesty’s ministers had been proper and fitting, and whether, as a subject of ancient Rome could hold himself free from indignity by saying *Civis Ro-*

manus sum, a British subject in a foreign country should not be protected by the vigilant eye and the strong arm of the Government against injustice and wrong."

Mr. Gladstone in his speech went over the whole foreign relations of the Government, discussed with much minuteness the special circumstances of the quarrel with Greece, and replied in the following fine passage to Lord Palmerston's allusion to the Roman citizen :

"Sir, great as is the influence and power of Britain, she can not afford to follow, for any length of time, a self-isolating policy. It would be a contravention of the law of nature and of God, if it were possible for any single nation of Christendom to emancipate itself from the obligations which bind all other nations, and to arrogate, in the face of mankind, a position of peculiar privilege. And now I will grapple with the noble lord on the ground which he selected for himself, in the most triumphant portion of his speech, by his reference to those emphatic words, *Civis Romanus sum*. He vaunted, amid the cheers of his supporters, that under his administration an Englishman should be, throughout the world, what the citizen of Rome had been. What then, sir, was a Roman citizen? He was the member of a privileged caste; he belonged to a conquering race, to a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power. For him there was to be an exceptional system of law; for him principles were to be asserted, and by him rights were to be enjoyed, that were denied to the rest of the world. Is such, then, the view of the noble lord as to the relation which is to subsist between

England and other countries? Does he make the claim for us that we are to be uplifted upon a platform high above the standing-ground of all other nations? It is, indeed, too clear, not only from the expressions but from the whole tone of the speech of the noble viscount, that too much of this notion is lurking in his mind; that he adopts, in part, that vain conception that we, forsooth, have a mission to be the censors of vice and folly, of abuse and imperfection, among the other countries of the world; that we are to be the universal schoolmasters; and that all those who hesitate to recognize our office can be governed only by prejudice or personal animosity, and should have the blind war of diplomacy forthwith declared against them. And certainly, if the business of a foreign secretary properly were to carry on diplomatic wars, all must admit that the noble lord is a master in the discharge of his functions. What, sir, ought a foreign secretary to be? Is he to be like some gallant knight at a tournament of old, pricking forth into the lists, armed at all points, confiding in his sinews and his skill, challenging all comers for the sake of honor, and having no other duty than to lay as many as possible of his adversaries sprawling in the dust? If such is the idea of a good foreign secretary, I, for one, would vote to the noble lord his present appointment for his life. But, sir, I do not understand the duty of a secretary for foreign affairs to be of such a character. I understand it to be his duty to conciliate peace with dignity. I think it to be the very first of all his duties studiously to observe, and to exalt in honor among mankind, that great code of principles which is termed the law of nations, which the honorable and learned member for Sheffield has found, indeed, to be very vague in their nature, and greatly

dependent on the discretion of each particular country, but in which I find, on the contrary, a great and noble monument of human wisdom, founded on the combined dictates of reason and experience, a precious inheritance bequeathed to us by the generations that have gone before us, and a firm foundation on which we must take care to build whatever it may be our part to add to their acquisitions, if, indeed, we wish to maintain and to consolidate the brotherhood of nations and to promote the peace and welfare of the world."

Mr. Gladstone went on to contend that it was the insular temper of Englishmen and their self-glorifying tendency which the policy of the noble lord, and the doctrines of his supporters, tended so much to strengthen, and which had given to that policy the quarrelsome character that marked some of their speeches. Then came the peroration of his speech :

"Sir, I say the policy of the noble lord tends to encourage and confirm in us that which is our besetting fault and weakness, both as a nation and as individuals. Let an Englishman travel where he will as a private person, he is found in general to be upright, high-minded, brave, liberal, and true; but with all this, foreigners are too often sensible of something that galls them in his presence, and I apprehend it is because he has too great a tendency to self-esteem—too little disposition to regard the feelings, the habits, and the ideas of others. Sir, I find this characteristic too plainly legible in the policy of the noble lord. I doubt not that use will be made of our present debate to work upon this peculiar weakness of

the English mind. The people will be told that those who oppose the motion are governed by personal motives, have no regard for public principles, no enlarged ideas of national policy. You will take your case before a favorable jury, and you think to gain your verdict; but, sir, let the House of Commons be warned—let it warn itself—against all illusions. There is in this case also a course of appeal. There is an appeal, such as the honorable and learned member for Sheffield has made, from the one House of Parliament to the other. There is a further appeal from this House of Parliament to the people of England; but, lastly, there is also an appeal from the people of England to the general sentiment of the civilized world; and I, for my part, am of opinion that England will stand shorn of a chief part of her glory and pride if she shall be found to have separated herself, through the policy she pursues abroad, from the moral supports which the general and fixed convictions of mankind afford—if the day shall come when she may continue to excite the wonder and the fear of other nations, but in which she shall have no part in their affection and regard.

“No, sir, let it not be so; let us recognize, and recognize with frankness, the equality of the weak with the strong; the principles of brotherhood among nations, and of their sacred independence. When we are asking for the maintenance of the rights which belong to our fellow subjects resident in Greece, let us do as we would be done by, and let us pay all the respect to a feeble state, and to the infancy of free institutions, which we should desire and should exact from others toward their maturity and their strength. Let us refrain from all gratuitous and arbitrary meddling in the internal concerns of other states,

even as we should resent the same interference if it were attempted to be practiced toward ourselves. If the noble lord has indeed acted on these principles, let the Government to which he belongs have your verdict in its favor; but, if he has departed from them, as I contend, and as I humbly think and urge upon you that it has been too amply proved, then the House of Commons must not shrink from the performance of its duty under whatever expectations of momentary obloquy or reproach, because we shall have done what is right; we shall enjoy the peace of our own consciences, and receive, whether a little sooner or a little later, the approval of the public voice for having entered our solemn protest against a system of policy which we believe, nay, which we know, whatever may be its first aspect, must, of necessity, in its final results be unfavorable even to the security of British subjects resident abroad, which it professes so much to study—unfavorable to the dignity of the country, which the motion of the honorable and learned member asserts it preserves—and equally unfavorable to that other great and sacred object, which also it suggests to our recollection, the maintenance of peace with the nations of the world.”

Speaking of the result of this great debate, Mr. Justin McCarthy says: “Nothing could be more complete than Palmerston’s success. ‘Civis Romanus’ settled the matter. Who was in the House of Commons so rude that he would not be a Roman? Who was there so lacking in patriotic spirit that would not have his countrymen as good as any Roman citizen of them all. It was to little purpose that Mr. Gladstone, in a

speech of singular argumentative power, pointed out that 'a Roman citizen was the member of a privileged caste, of a victorious and conquering nation, of a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power—which had one law for him and another for the rest of the world, which asserted in his favor principles which it denied to all others.' It was in vain that Mr. Gladstone asked whether Lord Palmerston thought that this was the position which it would become a civilized and Christian nation like England to claim for her citizens. The glory of being a 'Civis Romanus' was far too strong for any mere argument drawn from fact and common sense to combat against it. The phrase had carried the day. . . . In vain was the calm, grave, studiously moderate remonstrance of Sir Robert Peel, who, while generously declaring that Palmerston's speech 'made us all proud of the man who delivered it,' yet recorded his firm protest against the style of policy which Palmerston's eloquence had endeavored to glorify. The victory was all with Palmerston. He had, in the words of Shakespeare's Rosalind, wrestled well, and overthrown more than his enemies."

V.

THE PRISONS OF NAPLES.

IN the winter of 1850-'51 Mr. Gladstone spent several months in Naples. It was a sort of holiday trip, undertaken, as he himself explained, for "purely domestic" reasons; but while there he learned that a large number of the citizens of Naples, who had formed the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies, had been exiled or imprisoned by King Ferdinand, and that upward of twenty thousand of that monarch's subjects (as reported) had been thrown into prison on a charge of political disaffection. In the city of Naples alone, he discovered, there were some hundreds under indictment, *capitally*. Out of one hundred and forty deputies—this being the average of those who came to Naples to exercise the functions of the Legislative Chamber—seventy-six had either been arrested or had gone into exile; so that the Government of Naples had "consummated its audacity by putting into prison, or driving into banishment undergone for the sake of escaping prison, an actual majority of the representatives of the people."

"So much," says Mr. Smith, "for the numbers of those incarcerated. But the mode of procedure also was arbitrary in the extreme. The law of Naples required that personal liberty

should be inviolable, except under a warrant from a court of justice. Yet, in utter defiance of this law, the Government watched the people, paid domiciliary visits, ransacked houses, seized papers and effects, and tore up floors at pleasure under pretense of searching for arms, imprisoned men by the score, by the hundred, by the thousand, without any warrant whatever, sometimes without even any written authority at all, or anything beyond the word of a policeman, constantly without any statement whatever of the nature of the offense. Charges were fabricated to get rid of inconvenient persons. Perjury and forgery were resorted to in order to establish charges, and the whole mode of conducting trials was a burlesque of justice. Describing the dungeons, Mr. Gladstone says: 'The prisons of Naples, as is well known, are another name for the extreme of filth and horror. I have really seen something of them, but not the worst. This I have seen, my lord: the official doctors not going to the sick prisoners, but the sick prisoners, men almost with death on their faces, toiling up-stairs to them at that charnel-house of the Vicaria, because the lower regions of such a palace of darkness are too foul and loathsome to allow it to be expected that professional men should consent to earn bread by entering them.' The diet was abominable, and the filth of the prisons unendurable. After narrating the hardships of one

Pironte, formerly a judge, and of the Baron Porcari, Mr. Gladstone deals with the case of the distinguished patriot, Carlo Poerio. He was a refined and accomplished gentleman, a copious and elegant speaker, a respected and blameless character, yet he had been arrested and condemned for treason. After a pretty full examination of his case, the writer said: 'The condemnation of such a man for treason is a proceeding just as conformable to the laws of truth, justice, decency, and fair play, and to the common sense of the community—in fact, just as great and gross an outrage on them all—as would be a like condemnation in this country of any of our best-known public men—Lord John Russell, or Lord Lansdowne, or Sir James Graham, or yourself. There was no name dearer to the English nation than was that of Poerio to his Neapolitan fellow countrymen.' The case of Settembrini was also a mournful and remarkable one. The capital sentence passed upon him was not executed, but he was reserved for a fate much harder—double irons for life on a remote sea-girt rock, and it was feared that he was directly subjected to physical torture. The mode specified was that of thrusting sharp instruments under the finger nails. Mr. Gladstone narrates in detail the iniquitous proceedings in connection with Poerio, who had been tried and condemned on the sole accusation of a worthless character named Jervo-

lino. Yet Poerio would have been acquitted by a division of four to four of his judges, had not Navarro (who sat as a judge while directly concerned in the charge against the prisoner), by the distinct use of intimidation, procured the number necessary for sentence. A statement is furnished, on the authority of an eye-witness, as to the inhumanity with which invalid prisoners were treated by the Grand Criminal Court at Naples ; and Mr. Gladstone also minutely describes the manner of the imprisonment of Poerio and sixteen of his co-accused. Each prisoner bore a weight of chain amounting to thirty-two pounds, and for no purpose whatever were these chains undone. All the prisoners were confined night and day in a small room, which may be described as among the closest of dungeons. But Poerio was condemned after this to even a still lower depth of calamity. 'Never before have I conversed,' says Mr. Gladstone, speaking of Poerio, 'and never probably shall I converse again, with a cultivated and accomplished gentleman, of whose innocence, obedience to law, and love of his country, I was as firmly and as rationally assured as of your lordship's or that of any other man of the very highest character, while he stood before me amid surrounding felons, and clad in the vile uniform of guilt and shame. But he is now gone where he will scarcely have the opportunity even of such conversation. I can not honestly sup-

press my conviction that the object in the case of Poerio, as a man of mental power sufficient to be feared, is to obtain the scaffold's aim by means more cruel than the scaffold, and without the outcry which the scaffold would create.'"

Mr. Gladstone's sympathies were warmly enlisted on behalf of the oppressed Neapolitans, and he felt it his duty to attempt the redress of evils which were "a scandal to the name of civilization in Europe." On his return home, therefore, he published two letters, addressed to the Earl of Aberdeen, denouncing the Neapolitan system of government, and reciting the facts given in the preceding paragraphs. Three reasons, he explained, had led him to adopt this course : "First, that the present practices of the Government of Naples, in reference to real or supposed political offenders, are an outrage upon religion, upon civilization, upon humanity, and upon decency. Secondly, that these practices are certainly, and even rapidly, doing the work of Republicanism in that country—a political creed which has little natural or habitual root in the character of the people. Thirdly, that, as a member of the Conservative party in one of the great family of European nations, I am compelled to remember that that party stands in virtual and real, though perhaps unconscious, alliance with all the established governments of Europe as such ; and that, according to the measure of its

influence, they suffer more or less of moral detriment from its reverses, and derive strength and encouragement from its successes."

These letters excited great attention throughout Europe, and became the theme of a most virulent and violent controversy, which raged in France and Italy, as well as in England. The Neapolitan Government published an official reply, and the entire gang of subsidized scribblers throughout the Continent exhausted their venom upon the "audacious pamphleteer." The author, properly enough, regarded all this as proof that "the arrow has shot deep into the mark"; and in a rejoinder to the reply of the Neapolitan Government, issued in 1852, reiterated his charges, and fortified them with additional and confirmatory evidence. Moreover, any doubt as to the impression he had made upon those whom he desired to impress was set at rest by a speech of Lord Palmerston's, in the House of Commons, in which his lordship took occasion to say: "Mr. Gladstone has done himself, I think, very great honor by the course he pursued at Naples, and by the course he has followed since; for I think that, when you see an English gentleman, who goes to pass a winter at Naples, instead of confining himself to those amusements that abound in that city, instead of diving into volcanoes and exploring excavated cities—when we see him going to courts of justice, visiting prisons,

descending into dungeons, and examining great numbers of the cases of unfortunate victims of illegality and injustice with a view afterward to enlist public opinion in the endeavor to remedy those abuses—I think that is a course that does honor to the person who pursues it; and, concurring in feeling with him that the influence of public opinion in Europe might have some useful effect in setting such matters right, I thought it my duty to send copies of his pamphlet to our ministers at the various courts of Europe, directing them to give to each Government copies of the pamphlet, in the hope that, by affording them an opportunity of reading it, they might be led to use their influence in promoting what is the object of my honorable and gallant friend—a remedy for the evils to which he has referred.”

This announcement by the Foreign Secretary was warmly cheered by the House; and, when, a few days afterward, he was requested by Prince Castelcicala, the Neapolitan ambassador, to forward the reply of the Neapolitan Government to the different European courts to which Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet had been sent, his lordship promptly replied that he “must decline being accessory to the circulation of a pamphlet which, in my opinion, does no credit to its writer, or the Government which he defends, or to the political party of which he professes to be the champion.” He also informed the Prince that information re-

ceived from other sources led him to the conclusion that Mr. Gladstone had by no means overstated the various evils which he had described ; and that he (Lord Palmerston) regretted that the Neapolitan Government had not set to work earnestly and effectually to correct the manifold and grave abuses which clearly existed.

The immediate effect of Mr. Gladstone's denunciations was not commensurate, it must be confessed, with the excitement they aroused ; but "they bore fruit later, when Garibaldi and a free people marched into Naples, and King Bomba, his priests, his women, and his court, ran out" ; and Garibaldi himself declared long afterward that this eloquent protest was "the first trumpet-call of Italian liberty."

VI.

CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

IN the month of June, 1850, occurred that lamentable accident by which Sir Robert Peel lost his life, and England one of her most illustrious statesmen. This untoward event was followed by the disintegration of the party which had borne Peel's name, and been held together by his strong will and undisputed ascendancy.

“Several of its members formally joined the Conservative ranks ; but others, such as Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Sidney Herbert, held themselves aloof both from the Whigs and the Tories. They did not feel themselves at liberty at once to throw in their lot with the former, for Conservative traditions still exercised considerable influence over them, and they could not join the latter, as they were already the subjects of strong liberalizing tendencies.”

By slow degrees, in the case of Mr. Gladstone, these latter tendencies gained the ascendant, and by the end of the session of 1852 his alienation from the Conservative party was complete, though he did not formally join the Liberal ranks until some years afterward. He and his friends Sidney Herbert and Sir James Graham belonged for a time to neither party ; and, standing aloof, their ability acknowledged and their motives above suspicion, they probably exercised more influence upon the House of Commons than either group on the two front benches.

“If Mr. Gladstone,” says Mr. Lucy, “had died before 1853, he would have been accounted a brilliant politician cut off before the ripeness of years had brought him fullness of opportunity. He had done great things, but their character was rather critical than constructive. He had spoken brilliantly, but had not achieved anything likely to secure him permanent fame. In 1853, how-

ever, the square peg was happily thrust into the square hole, and Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer. His remarkable ability for dealing with figures, and evolving a comprehensive scheme out of a multiplicity of details, had been shown in the Tariffs bill already alluded to. In 1852 he showed in stronger light his mastery over the science of national finance. At this epoch Lord Derby was Premier and Mr. Disraeli was Chancellor of the Exchequer. The latter had introduced his first budget in an elaborate speech, extending over five hours and a quarter, and which, unless it greatly differed from all his orations of similar proportions, must have been intolerably heavy. To one listener, however, it possessed a keen and enthralling interest. Mr. Gladstone had not, up to this period, entered upon that constant attitude of personal antagonism with Mr. Disraeli which subsequent events and relative positions created. He had answered and been answered by him in the course of debate. But the House and the country had not as yet come to look with keen interest for what might follow upon a conflict between these two men, who have no possession in common except genius. Circumstances, however, were rapidly tending toward the creation of the condition of affairs we are now familiar with. Mr. Gladstone could never forgive Mr. Disraeli's bitter attacks on his old friend and master, Sir Robert Peel, and had

loudly cheered Sidney Herbert when, in a moment of passionate indignation, that gentleman had pointed to the Treasury bench, where now prosperously sat the detractor of the great Free-Trader, and asked the House to behold in him 'a spectacle of humiliation.' When Mr. Disraeli essayed to deal with finance, Mr. Gladstone with fierce delight sprung upon him, and gripped him so sorely that he made an end of him, his budget, and the Ministry of which he was the prop. Lord Derby resigned, and Lord Aberdeen, being called upon to form a ministry, invited Mr. Gladstone to take the office out of which he had driven Mr. Disraeli."

This first encounter between the two great Parliamentary rivals of a generation is interesting enough to pause over for a moment. "The debate," says Mr. Justin McCarthy, "was one of the finest of the kind ever heard in Parliament during our time. The excitement on both sides was intense. The rivalry was hot and eager. Mr. Disraeli was animated by all the power of desperation, and was evidently in a mood neither to give nor to take quarter. He assailed Sir Charles Wood, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, with a vehemence and even a virulence which certainly added much to the piquancy and interest of the discussion so far as listeners were concerned, but which more than once went to the verge of the limits of Parliamentary decorum. It was in the

course of this speech that Disraeli, leaning across the table and directing his words full at Sir Charles Wood, declared, 'I care not to be the right honorable gentleman's critic, but, if he has learned his business, he has yet to learn that petulance is not sarcasm, and that insolence is not invective.' The House had not heard the concluding word of Disraeli's bitter and impassioned speech, when at two o'clock in the morning Mr. Gladstone leaped to his feet to answer him. Then began that long Parliamentary duel which only knew a truce when, at the close of the session of 1876, Mr. Disraeli crossed the threshold of the House of Commons for the last time, thenceforward to take his place among the peers as Lord Beaconsfield. During all the intervening four-and-twenty years these two men were rivals in power and in Parliamentary debate as much as Pitt and Fox had been. Their opposition, like that of Pitt and Fox, was one of temperament and character as well as of genius, position, and political opinion. The rivalry of this first heated and eventful night was a splendid display. Those who had thought it impossible that any impression could be made upon the House after the speech of Mr. Disraeli, had to acknowledge that a yet greater impression was produced by the unprepared reply of Mr. Gladstone. The House divided about four o'clock in the morning, and the Government were left in a minority of nineteen. Mr. Disraeli took the

defeat with his characteristic composure. The morning was cold and wet. 'It will be an unpleasant day for going to Osborne,' he quietly remarked to a friend as they went down Westminster Hall together and looked out into the dreary streets. That day, at Osborne, the resignation of the Ministry was formally placed in the hands of the Queen."

The acceptance by Mr. Gladstone of a post in the Aberdeen Ministry marked his final passage across the great gulf that separates Toryism from Liberalism. Lord Aberdeen was not what in these days would be called a Liberal; but neither was he a Tory—in fact, he was successor to the overthrown Tory Ministry—and from this time on the breach between Mr. Gladstone and his old political associates was irrevocable.

The transition being now complete, this seems the proper place to explain how so great a change of opinion was brought about, and for this purpose we quote another striking passage from Mr. McCarthy :

"Mr. Gladstone grew slowly into Liberal convictions. At the time when he joined the Coalition Ministry he was still regarded as one who had scarcely left the camp of Toryism, and who had only joined that Ministry because it was a coalition. Years after, he was applied to by the late Lord Derby to join a ministry formed by him; and it was not supposed that there was anything

unreasonable in the proposition. The first impulse toward Liberal principles was given to his mind, probably, by his change with his leader from protection to free trade. When a man like Gladstone saw that his traditional principles and those of his party had broken down in any one direction, it was but natural that he should begin to question their endurance in other directions. The whole fabric of belief was built up together. Gladstone's was a mind of that order that sees a principle in everything, and must, to adopt the phrase of a great preacher, make the plowing as much a part of religious duty as the praying. The interests of religion seemed to him bound up with the creed of Conservatism; the principles of protection must, probably, at one time have seemed a part of the whole creed, of which one article was as sacred as another. His intellect and his principles, however, found themselves compelled to follow the guidance of his leader in the matter of free trade; and, when inquiry thus began, it was not very likely soon to stop. He must have seen how much the working of such a principle as that of protection became a class interest in England, and how impossible it would have been for it to continue long in existence under an extended and popular suffrage. In other countries the fallacy of protection did not show itself so glaringly in the eyes of the poorer classes, for in other countries it was not the staple

food of the population that became the principal object of a protective duty. But in England the bread on which the poorest had to live was made to pay a tax for the benefit of landlords and farmers. As long as one believed this to be a necessary condition of a great unquestionable creed, it was easy for a young statesman to reconcile himself to it. It might bear cruelly on individuals, or even multitudes; but so would the law of gravitation, as Mill has remarked, bear harshly on the best of men when it dashed him down from a height and broke his bones. It would be idle to question the existence of the law on that account, or to disbelieve the whole teaching of the physical science which explains its movements. But when Mr. Gladstone came to be convinced that there was no such law as the protection principle at all; that it was a mere sham; that to believe in it was to be guilty of an economic heresy—then it was impossible for him not to begin questioning the genuineness of the whole system of political thought, of which it formed but a part. Perhaps, too, he was impelled toward Liberal principles at home by seeing what the effects of opposite doctrines had been abroad. He rendered memorable service to the Liberal cause of Europe by his eloquent protest against the brutal treatment of Baron Poerio and other Liberals of Naples who were imprisoned by the Neapolitan king. . . . In rendering service to

Liberalism and to Europe, he rendered service also to his own intelligence. He helped to set free his own spirit as well as the Neapolitan people. We find him, as his career goes on, dropping the traditions of his youth, always rising higher in Liberalism, and not going back."

Addressing himself with characteristic energy to the work of his new position, Mr. Gladstone, shortly after he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced a scheme for the reduction of the National Debt, which was adopted by the House, and which, together with other financial reforms, enabled the country to meet with ease the strain of the Crimean War. "On the 18th of April, 1853," says Mr. Lucy, "Mr. Gladstone delivered the first of what has proved to be a long series of budget speeches unsurpassed in Parliamentary history. There are some members in the present House who have a vivid recollection of this occasion. Expectation stood on tiptoe. The House was crowded in every part, and it remained crowded and tireless, while for the space of five hours Mr. Gladstone poured forth a flood of oratory which made arithmetic astonishingly easy, and gave an unaccustomed grace to statistics. Merely as an oratorical display, the speech was a rare treat to the crowded assembly that heard it, and to the innumerable company which some hours later read it. But the form was rendered doubly enchanting by the substance. It was clear

that Mr. Gladstone could not only adorn the exposition of finance with the gifts of oratory, but he could control the developments of finance with a master-hand. His scheme was a bold one, and of a kind altogether different from a succession recently commended to public notice. The young and untried Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself with a surplus of something over three quarters of a million. This was not much. But it was enough to have made things pleasant in one or two influential quarters, and he might have hoped for a fuller purse next year. To have taken this course, to have dribbled away the surplus, and practically to have left matters where they stood, would moreover have saved him an infinitude of trouble, and relieved him from a tremendous risk. Scorning these considerations, and plunging into the troubled sea with the confident daring of genius, he positively increased taxation, chiefly by manipulation of the income tax, and was thereby enabled, in a wholesale manner that seems scarcely less than magical, to reduce or absolutely abolish the duties on nearly three hundred articles of commerce of daily use. Of course the secret of the financier's magic lay in that sound principle which he may be said to have inaugurated in British finance, and under the extended application of which trade and commerce have advanced with leaps and bounds. He reckoned upon that property in national finance

which is known as the 'elasticity of revenue,' and which is now safely, and as a matter of calculation, counted upon presently to make good deficiencies immediately accruing upon reduction of taxation. There is nothing remarkable in the adoption of this principle now, any more than there is in the application of a lighted match to a gas-burner when we want light in a darkened room. But in 1853 the experiment was as novel and its results as surprising as would have been the introduction of a blazing gas-chandelier in the House of Commons when William Pitt was explaining his budget of 1783. Perhaps the most remarkable thing in connection with Mr. Gladstone's first budget was the confidence with which its predictions were accepted. Everywhere it was applauded, and, though Mr. Disraeli, as the leader of the Opposition, supported an amendment against it, this was a matter of course. Equally, as a matter of course, the budget resolutions were approved, and the beneficial reign of sound finance, inspired by rare genius and directed by superlative energy, forthwith commenced."

Referring to this first budget, Mr. Justin McCarthy says that the speech with which it was introduced "was regarded as a positive curiosity of financial exposition. It was a performance that belonged to the department of the fine arts. The speech occupied several hours, and assuredly no listener wished it shorter by a single sen-

tence. Pitt, we read, had the same art of making a budget speech a fascinating discourse ; but in our time no minister has had this gift except Mr. Gladstone. Each time that he essayed the same task subsequently he accomplished just the same success."

So great was their attraction that these annual budget speeches came to be regarded as the great events of the successive sessions, and regularly drew crowds such as are rarely brought together in the House of Commons save by the most momentous debates ; and each successive budget strengthened the public confidence in Mr. Gladstone's capacity for his work. "It was felt," says Mr. Molesworth (in his "History of England from the Year 1830") "by all classes of persons throughout the country that its financial operations were now directed by a master-hand ; that the work which Peel had so ably commenced was being carried out by Gladstone, not in a spirit of servile imitation, but with a bold originality of conception, and a happy force and eloquence of expression, which placed him fully on a level with the lamented statesman whose work he was successfully endeavoring to complete. The people, therefore, submitted cheerfully to the burden of a heavy and oppressive tax, in the full conviction that the continuance of it was necessary in order to enable the Chancellor of the Exchequer to place the national finances on a footing which

would increase the wealth and well-being of all classes of the people.”

VII.

THE CRIMEAN WAR.

“NEVER, perhaps,” says Mr. Molesworth, “had the condition and prospects of the nation been more satisfactory than they were during the later months of 1853. The Parliamentary session had been fruitful of important measures. The Ministry appeared to command general confidence, and to be likely to remain in office for a long time; the finances of the country, under the able management of Mr. Gladstone, were in a condition of progressive improvement; trade and manufactures were flourishing in almost all their departments. It was true that the harvest was not all that could be desired; but this was to a great extent compensated by the freeness with which corn could now be drawn from all parts of the world to supply the deficiencies of our own crops. The nation seemed to be entering on a period of unbounded prosperity and progress; but a dark cloud was slowly rising in the East, and casting its ominous shadows on the fair prospect.”

It would be beyond the purpose or compass of this book to enter into a detailed account of the causes and progress of the Crimean War. The complications in which it began had their source in a miserable squabble between Latin and Greek monks about what they called the Holy Places—that is to say, the places which were traditionally regarded as the scenes of Christ's birth and sufferings ; but the chief object of contention was the possession of the key of the great door of the church at Bethlehem, and the right to place a silver star in the cave or grotto in which it was alleged that the Saviour of the world was born, and which was covered by the sacred edifice.

The quarrel differed in no respect from dozens of others that arise from time to time in the same connection, and would easily have been settled or compromised ; but, unfortunately, the cause of the Greeks was adopted by the Russian Government, while that of the Latins was championed by the new French Government, each endeavoring by negotiations with the Porte to secure the triumph of the party whose cause it espoused. “The Russian Government in all probability cared little about the squabble, and the French Government nothing at all. But political considerations led both parties to press the matter with an earnestness out of all proportion to their real opinion of its importance. The Russian emperor was not disposed to yield an inch to the new French Gov-

ernment, which he had reluctantly and ungraciously recognized ; and the French emperor durst not allow himself to be humiliated by the Czar. He knew that in upholding the claims of the Latins he was maintaining a cause that was very dear to the majority of the French Catholics ; and that nothing would be more likely to bring support to his government from the people of France, and especially from the Liberal party of that country, now estranged from and hostile to him, than a firm attitude toward Russia. There is, however, no reason to suppose that the French emperor was anxious for war. He seems, on the contrary, to have used every effort to bring the contest to a peaceful and honorable termination ; but, having once entered on it, he could not draw back."

The Turks, in their indifference, would cheerfully have given twenty keys, if by this means they could have satisfied the contending parties. But neither party was disposed to accept a compromise, and, unfortunately, as the dispute went on, the question of the Holy Places became complicated with another and still more dangerous question—that of the protectorate over the Greek Christians in Turkey which the Czar claimed under a clause of the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, made in 1774. This claim enlisted Turkey in the quarrel and greatly intensified it ; and at last (July 2, 1853) the Czar Nicholas cut

the Gordian knot of diplomacy by dispatching two divisions of his army across the Pruth to take possession of the Danubian Principalities. Even this menacing step did not put an end to negotiations, but all expedients failed, and before the end of the year Turkey had formally declared war against Russia, and France and England were vigorously preparing for the conflict.

In the earlier stages of the dispute the Czar appears to have counted upon the neutrality, if not the active sympathy, of England ; but Englishmen have always been sensitive to any Russian advance toward the Mediterranean as menacing the connection with India, and, as soon as the controversy assumed a warlike phase, it became evident that France and England would fight the battle as allies.

Yet England's participation in the war was essentially the work of her people rather than of her statesmen. Lord Aberdeen was strenuously opposed to war, and nearly all his Cabinet shared his feeling. This was especially the case with Mr. Gladstone, who, on humanitarian as well as on national grounds, was opposed to the arbitrament of arms. The Premier had gone so far as to resolve not to remain at the head of the Government unless he could maintain peace, and it was understood that Mr. Gladstone also would refuse to hold a position in a war ministry.

Lord Palmerston was the only member of the

Cabinet who was eager for war, and he, backed up by the warlike enthusiasm of the people, and aided by the blunders of the Russian Government, carried the day. The occupation of the Principalities had aroused a strong feeling of resentment throughout Europe, but especially in England; the so-called "massacre of Sinope" stimulated the war feeling almost to the pitch of frenzy; and on the 28th of March, 1854, England formally declared war against Russia.

The war thus initiated entailed on England an exceedingly heavy expenditure, and upon Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, fell the task of providing the necessary means. Instead of that remission of taxation to which he had looked forward, and for which he had smoothed the way, he was called upon to prepare a war budget. Not only was the surplus swallowed up, but he was compelled to increase the income tax, the spirit duties, and the malt tax. "Faced by no ordinary difficulties," says Mr. Smith, "Mr. Gladstone's fertility in resource was again apparent at this juncture. He conceived a scheme by which the country should not be permanently burdened with the expenses of the impending war. Prince Albert, in a letter to Baron Stockmar, referred to this plan. Mr. Gladstone desired to pay for the war out of current revenue, provided it did not require more than ten millions sterling beyond the ordinary expenditure. In

order to meet this extra charge, however, he had no option but to increase the taxes. / Mr. Disraeli—in duty bound, perhaps, as the mouthpiece of a strong Opposition—propounded a different scheme. He desired to borrow, thus increasing the debt; he was opposed to the imposition of any fresh taxes. ‘The former course,’ said the Prince Consort to his friend, ‘is manly, statesmanlike, and honest; the latter is convenient, cowardly, and perhaps popular.’ But in a remarkable manner the people of England rose to the exigencies of the situation. They approved the plans of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, though fraught with temporary inconvenience. Mr. Gladstone had not misinterpreted the feeling of the country. It was ready to bear the burden which it in reality called down upon itself, and to meet, as they occurred, the expenses of the war. Never was patriotism more strongly displayed than at this period. A minister may frequently acquire popularity by leaving to succeeding generations the discharge of those pecuniary liabilities which arise in connection with exceptional events. But Mr. Gladstone fought against this policy. Though, as he said, ‘every good motive and every bad motive, combated only by the desire of the approval of honorable men and by conscientious rectitude—every motive of ease, of comfort, and of certainty spring forward in his mind to induce a chancellor of the exchequer to become the

first man to recommend a loan'—he resisted the temptation, and was rewarded by the support of Parliament and the country."

Unfortunately, as the war went on, the expenses became so enormous that it was impossible to adhere strictly to the "manly and statesman-like" policy of bringing the income up to the expenditure. Loans had to be resorted to ; but, throughout, Mr. Gladstone acted as consistently as possible on the theory that those who make war should pay for it, and not throw the burden upon posterity. And it was largely due to his skillful finance that England was so little crippled by an enormously costly conflict, which disorganized the industry of more than half of Europe.

In other respects, however, the management of affairs was far from satisfactory. For nearly forty years England had been at peace, and the sudden and violent strain of an unexpected war showed that every department of the service was either disorganized or hampered by routine. The army, whenever it had the opportunity, covered itself with glory ; but the news sent home during the winter showed that there were foes far more formidable than the Russians—cold, sickness, and gross incompetence. The intensity of the cold was so great that no one might dare to touch any metal substance in the open air with his bare hand under penalty of leaving the skin behind him ; yet the soldiers had to face this weather

without tents, without blankets, and in many cases without shoes. The hospitals for the sick and wounded were in such an utterly chaotic condition that, but for the timely arrival of Florence Nightingale with her trained staff of nurses, this essential branch of the service must have wholly collapsed. "In some instances medical stores were left to decay at Varna, or were found lying useless in the holds of vessels in Balaklava Bay, which were needed for the wounded at Scutari. The medical officers were able and zealous men; the stores were provided and paid for, so far as our Government was concerned; but the stores were not brought to the medical men. These had their hands all but idle, their eyes and souls tortured by the sight of sufferings which they were unable to relieve for want of the commonest appliances of the hospital. The most extraordinary instances of blunder and confusion were constantly coming to light. Great consignments of boots arrived, and were found to be all for the left foot. Mules for the conveyance of stores were contracted for and delivered, but delivered so that they came into the hands of the Russians, and not of us. Shameful frauds were perpetrated in the instance of some of the contracts for preserved meat. 'One man's preserved meat,' exclaimed 'Punch,' with bitter humor, 'is another man's poison.'"

All these things, as they gradually became known, aroused a passion of indignation among

the people at home ; and this indignation was not long in making itself felt in the House of Commons. Mr. Roebuck, in January, 1855, moved for the appointment of a select committee “to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those departments of the Government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of the army.” Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone vigorously opposed the motion ; but, says Mr. Smith, “the result of the division was one of the greatest surprises ever experienced in Parliamentary history. The numbers were—for Mr. Roebuck’s committee, 305 ; against, 148—majority against Ministers, 157. The scene was a peculiar and, probably, an unparalleled one. The cheers which are usually heard from one side or other of the House on the numbers of a division being announced were not forthcoming. The members were for the moment spellbound with astonishment ; then there came a murmur of amazement, and finally a burst of general laughter.”

On the 1st of February Lord Aberdeen handed in his resignation ; and thus, amid the laughter of the House of Commons and the reproaches of popular indignation, collapsed the famous Coalition Ministry—sometimes known as the “Administration of all the Talents.”

Mr. Gladstone was one of the few members of the Aberdeen Cabinet who did not share the

blame for the mismanagement of which it had been convicted ; and, when on the resignation of Lord Aberdeen Lord Palmerston was directed by the Queen to form a ministry, he invited Mr. Gladstone to resume his place as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He accepted, but, when a few weeks later, Mr. Roebuck gave notice of the appointment forthwith of his select committee and Lord Palmerston accepted it, Mr. Gladstone once more retired from office ; and from this time until the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris in 1856 was one of the most eloquent and persistent advocates of peace.

That which makes the Crimean War especially interesting in connection with Mr. Gladstone's personal history is that his conduct in that crisis has been made the basis of frequent attacks upon him for his conduct in a later and similar crisis—the Russo-Turkish war of 1877. Why, it has been asked, should a statesman, who led his country into one war in behalf of Turkey and in defense of “British interests,” so fiercely assail a rival statesman who at a later period was making another gallant stand in behalf of the same ally and in defense of the same “British interests” ?

Such a question, often repeated, renders it important to define Mr. Gladstone's position. In the first place, as has been seen, it can not be truly said that Mr. Gladstone led his country into the Crimean War. On the contrary, like his chief,

Lord Aberdeen, he “drifted” into the war while vigorously opposing it, and doing everything in his power to avert it. In the next place, Mr. Gladstone maintains that the two cases cited as identical are in fact totally different from each other. The doctrine of “British interests”—meaning the maintenance of the Porte, with all its crimes, in its “integrity and independence,” as the proper bulwark of British sway in India—is essentially a recent invention, and was not the avowed doctrine of the British Government in the proceedings that led to the Crimean War. “Unless,” says Mr. Gladstone, “the Sovereign and her Consort, with their matchless opportunities of knowledge, were absolutely blindfolded, the policy which led us into that war was that of repressing an offense against the public law of Europe, but only by the united authority of the Powers of Europe.” Again, speaking of the comparisons that have been drawn between the two periods, he says :

“There was in each case an offender against the law and peace of Europe; Turkey, by her distinct and obstinate breach of covenant, taking on the later occasion the place which Russia had held in the earlier controversy. There were in each case prolonged attempts to put down the offense by means of European concert. In 1853-’4 these proceeded without a check until the eve of the war. In 1875-’7 the combination was sadly intermittent; but, in the singular and unprecedented confer-

ence at Constantinople, it was, at least on the part of the assembled representatives, perfectly unequivocal. In 1854 the refusal of Prussia to support words by acts completely altered the situation ; and in 1876-'7 the assurance conveyed to Turkey from England that only moral suasion was intended, had the same effect. The difference was that, in 1854-'5, two great Powers, with the partial support of a third, prosecuted by military means the work they had undertaken ; in 1877 it was left to Russia alone to act as the hand and sword of Europe, with the natural consequence of weighting the scale with the question what compensation she might claim, or would claim, for her efforts and sacrifices."

How closely similar are the sentiments recently expressed by Mr. Gladstone to those which he entertained at the earlier period is shown by a passage in a speech which he made during the session of 1856 in a debate on the terms of the treaty of peace ! He said that he regarded the treaty as an honorable one, because the objects of the war had been attained. Referring to the statement that England had become bound, with the other Christian Powers of Europe, not only for the maintenance and integrity of the Turkish empire against foreign aggression, but also for the maintenance of Turkey as a Mohammedan state, he said :

"If I thought, sir, that this treaty of peace was an instrument which bound this country and our posterity, as well as our allies, to the maintenance of a set of in-

stitutions in Turkey which you are endeavoring to reform if you can, but with respect to which endeavor few can be sanguine, I should not be content to fall back upon the amendment of my noble friend [Lord C. Hamilton], expressing that I regarded the peace with satisfaction; but, on the contrary, I should look out for the most emphatic word in which to express my sense of condemnation of a peace which bound us to maintain the law and institutions of Turkey as a Mohammedan state."

VIII.

STUDIES IN HOMER.

It is in the highest degree characteristic of Mr. Gladstone that he has employed such scant intervals of leisure as he could secure, amid his arduous and exacting labors as a man of affairs, in studies which other men would probably regard, not as recreation, but as constituting an occupation in themselves. The study of Homer is commonly considered to furnish the legitimate subject for a life-work. "There is no other author," as Mr. Gladstone says, "whose case is analogous to this, or of whom it can be said that the study of him is not a mere matter of literary criticism, but is a full study of life in every one of its departments."

For a man engaged as Mr. Gladstone has been

in the most arduous and exacting public labors, it would have been creditable if he had merely acquired a reader's knowledge of so extensive a circle of studies ; but from his earliest youth the poems of Homer have been to him as a companion, and no living Englishman—few living scholars anywhere—have made more valuable contributions than he to the literature of Homerology. Wherever the study of Homer has its votaries and enthusiasts, the views of Mr. Gladstone upon the various questions involved in it are quoted and respected ; and in his own country no one has done so much as he to rescue the Homeric poems from the dull routine of the schools.

During many years previously he had been accumulating and sifting the materials for such a work ; but on his release from the cares of office in 1856 he turned to the subject with renewed ardor, and in 1858 appeared, in three large volumes, his "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age." "The purely technical parts of this work," says Mr. Smith, "are very elaborate in detail, but these are not the portions which most closely touch the general reader, who is unable to enter into the controversy upon the text of Homer, the catalogue, and the hundred other ramifications of the subject which are of profound interest to the student. But there are many passages in the work possessing a general value for the breadth of their speculation, the lessons

and conclusions they endeavor to enforce, the comparisons instituted between ancient and modern genius, and for the admirable spirit and eloquence with which they are written."

In the beginning of his work Mr. Gladstone takes a general survey of the Homeric controversy, shows the place of Homer in classical education, develops the historic aims of Homer, discusses the probable trustworthiness of the text, and attempts to fix the place and authority of the poet in historical inquiry. He is a strenuous advocate of the unity of authorship both of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey"; and thinks that Homer was not only a native Greek, but that he lived within a generation or two of the Trojan War, and probably sang his songs to the children and grandchildren of the heroes who participated in the great conflict. In regard to the text of the poems, while conceding that there are portions which have obviously been interpolated or altered, he yet bases the whole structure of his criticism and theories upon the substantial general correctness of the text.

Concerning the highly important question as to the place and authority of Homer in historical inquiry, Mr. Gladstone says: "In regard to the religion, history, ethnology, polity, and life at large of the Greeks of the heroic times, the authority of the Homeric poems, standing far above that of the whole mass of the later literary tra-

ditions in any of their forms, ought never to be treated as homogeneous with them, but should usually, in the first instance, be handled by itself, and the testimony of later writers should, in general, be handled in subordination to it, and should be tried by it, as by a touchstone, on all the subjects which it embraces. Homer is not only older by some generations than Hesiod, and by many centuries than Æschylus and the other great Greek writers, but enjoys a superiority in another important respect, viz., that no age since his own has produced a more acute, accurate, and comprehensive observer. Judging from internal evidence, he alone stood within the precincts of the heroic time, and was imbued from head to foot with its spirit and its associations."

After dealing with these preliminary questions, the author proceeds to discuss the ethnology of the Greek races; the mythology of the Homeric age, and the supernatural system or theo-mythology of Homer; the origin of the Olympian religion; the morals or ethics of the Homeric age; woman in the heroic age; and the office of the Homeric poems in relation to that of the early books of the Bible. Then come sections upon the Politics of the Homeric age; upon Trojans and Greeks; upon the Geography of the poems; and upon "Some Points of the Poetry of Homer." This last division is particularly interesting, for in

it are discussed the plot of the "Iliad" ; the sense of beauty in Homer, human, animal, and inanimate ; Homer's perception and use of number ; Homer's perception and use of color ; Homer and some of his successors in epic poetry, particularly Virgil and Tasso ; some principal Homeric characters in Troy—Hector, Helen, and Paris ; and the decadence of the great Homeric characters in the later tradition. "The section in which comparisons are instituted between Homer and Milton, Dante, Virgil, and Tasso, is distinguished for its broad and profound criticism, though some of the judgments expressed will probably be found to clash with those formed by readers who have their individual favorites among the epic poets."

Mr. Smith justly characterizes the work, in its elaborate detail, as "a colossal monument of the author's patience and Homeric knowledge." "Seldom is it," he continues, "that so great an undertaking is successfully executed by one engaged in the business and turmoil of political life. But we perceive in the author's enthusiasm and deep love of his subject the incentives which alone rendered such a work possible under these circumstances. In the concluding words of the last volume Mr. Gladstone himself touches upon the pleasing and engrossing nature of his task. He observes that to pass from the study of Homer to the ordinary business of the world is to step out of a palace of enchantments into the cold gray

light of a polar day. 'But the spells,' he adds, 'in which this sorcerer deals have no affinity with that drug from Egypt which drowns the spirit in effeminate indifference : rather they are like the *φάρμακον ἐσθλόν*, the remedial specific, which, freshening the understanding by contact with the truth and strength of nature, should both improve its vigilance against deceit and danger, and increase its vigor and resolution for the discharge of duty.' "

A much greater critic, Mr. Edward A. Freeman, describes "these noble volumes" as a work which would be a worthy fruit of a life spent in learned retirement, and adds : "As the work of one of our first orators and statesmen, they are altogether wonderful. Not, indeed, that Mr. Gladstone's two characters of scholar and statesman have done aught but help and strengthen one another. His long experience of the world has taught him the better to appreciate Homer's wonderful knowledge of human nature ; the practical aspect of his poems, the deep moral and political lessons which they teach, become a far more true and living thing to the man of busy life than they can ever be to the mere solitary student. And, perhaps, his familiarity with the purest and most ennobling source of inspiration may have had some effect in adorning Mr. Gladstone's political oratory with more than one of its noblest features. . . . What strikes one more than anything

else throughout Mr. Gladstone's volumes is the intense earnestness, the loftiness of moral purpose, which breathes in every page. He has not taken up Homer as a plaything, nor even as a mere literary enjoyment. To him the study of the prince of poets is clearly a means by which himself and other men may be made wiser and better." He points out that the work is not without defects, but concedes that, in spite of these, the volumes are "worthy alike of their author and of their subject, the freshest and most genial tribute to ancient literature which has been paid even by an age rich in such offerings." In them, Mr. Gladstone has "done such justice to Homer and his age as Homer has never received out of his own land. He has vindicated the true position of the greatest of poets; he has cleared his tale and its actors from the misrepresentations of ages."

This elaborate work upon Homer Mr. Gladstone has followed up with kindred writings at various periods. In 1869 appeared "*Juventus Mundi; Gods and Men of the Heroic Age in Greece*," in which the author states that he has endeavored to embody the greater part of the results which he had reached in the previous "*Studies*." This latter work is of a more popular character than its predecessor, and also contains some modifications of views at which the author had arrived during the intervening period

of ten years. A still further popularization of his studies is to be found in the excellent and interesting "Primer of Homer," which he contributed, in 1879, to Mr. J. R. Green's series of "Literature Primers."

In 1876 appeared "Homeric Synchronism : An Inquiry into the Time and Place of Homer," a work written in the belief that "the time had at length come for serious effort to connect the poems of Homer, by means of the internal evidence which they supply, with events and personages which are now known from other sources to belong to periods, already approximately defined, of the primeval history of the human race"—namely, with portions of the series of Egyptian dynasties. These are Mr. Gladstone's principal contributions to Homerology ; but, besides these, he has written various articles for the magazines and reviews, and has touched upon the subject in several public addresses.

"We now part from these Homeric studies, into which Mr. Gladstone has thrown so much perception, learning, and research. The Siege of Troy and the Wanderings of Ulysses possess an undying charm, whether their chief incidents be wholly fictitious, partially fictitious, or veritable history ; and no nobler study could well engage the leisure of a man of culture. It is worthy of note, in conclusion, that, after all his just and lofty encomiums upon the Homeric records, Mr.

Gladstone deduces from them the great abiding lesson, that they do but ‘show us the total inability of our race, even when at its maximum of power, to solve for ourselves the problem of our destiny; to extract for ourselves the sting from care, from sorrow, and, above all, from death; or even to retain without waste the knowledge of God, where we have become separate from the source which imparts it.’”

IX.

IN A LIBERAL MINISTRY.

ONE incident of the period during which Mr. Gladstone was absent from the Government benches is worthy of mention. In 1858 he accepted from the Earl of Derby the appointment of Lord High Commissioner Extraordinary to the Ionian Islands, and in that capacity went out to Corfu. The Ionian Islands were under the protection of England, and, difficulties having arisen, owing to the desire of the inhabitants to sever the connection with England and unite themselves with the kingdom of Greece, Mr. Gladstone was dispatched on a commission of inquiry. He does not appear to have accomplished much beyond reporting to the Government at home that “the single and unanimous will of the Ionian people

has been and is for their union with the kingdom of Greece"; and in February, 1859, he returned home, having been succeeded by a regularly appointed lord high commissioner. It will be remembered that the hope of the Islanders was postponed until 1864, when they were formally handed over to Greece.

After his retirement from Lord Palmerston's Ministry, Mr. Gladstone occupied the position of an independent member in the House of Commons, sometimes opposing and sometimes supporting the measures both of Lord Palmerston and of the Administration of the Earl of Derby, which succeeded to power in 1858. Early in the year 1859 an unexpected revolution of the political wheel brought him again into office. "The desire for Parliamentary Reform," says Mr. Molesworth, "had never ceased to exist; but the agitation of the question had been to a great extent suspended during the years that had passed between the collapse of Chartism in 1848 and the period we have now reached. The attention of the legislature and the country had been engrossed by the Great Exhibition, by the Crimean, Chinese, Persian, and Indian wars, and by other events of less importance. The consequence was that the consideration of this question had, with general consent, been postponed to a more convenient season. Now, however, the state of parties favored the revival of its agitation; and toward the close of

1858 several large and important meetings were held for the purpose of manifesting the feeling. . . . It is true that the feeling exhibited in favor of it was far inferior in intensity to that which had prevailed in 1831 and 1832. For this there were many reasons. The abuses of our representative system were not nearly so glaring as those which existed before the passage of the first Reform bill; the influence of public opinion was much more powerful than it had been; class legislation was on the wane; the number of those who constituted the electoral body was proportionately much larger, the number of those excluded from it was proportionately much smaller; the condition of the country was very different, for, instead of the suffering that prevailed in 1831, and affected almost every class and description of persons, there was in 1858 general prosperity and contentment. All these circumstances tended to abate the eagerness with which a reform of our electoral system was demanded. Nevertheless, a strong feeling in favor of such a reform existed at this time, and its existence is proved by the fact that not only Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston were prepared to deal with the question, but that even Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, knowing as they did the perils they would have to encounter not only from their political opponents, but also, and perhaps even more formidably, from the more extreme section of their political sup-

porters, felt that the only course open to them was that of boldly braving these dangers, and staking the existence of their government on the success of a measure for the reform of Parliament. Their intention to do this, though not known, was suspected ; and it was generally believed at the end of this year that a measure of Parliamentary Reform would be announced in the Queen's speech, and introduced at an early period of the approaching session. Both parties were therefore looking forward, not, indeed, with strongly excited feelings such as the question had formerly raised, but still with a certain anxious and feverish curiosity, for the introduction of the bill which the Cabinet of Lord Derby was understood to be engaged in framing, and to the struggle for which it would be sure to be the signal in the next Parliamentary session."

The expected measure was introduced early in the session of 1859, and at once aroused a storm of opposition. Two of the more conservative members of the Cabinet seceded rather than support it, yet it was by no means thorough-going enough to satisfy the demands of the reformers. Mr. Gladstone gave the measure a modified support, on the ground that it was at least a step in advance, but after a long discussion the Government was defeated by a substantial majority in an exceedingly full House. Thereupon Lord Derby dissolved Parliament and appealed to the country,

but, the verdict of the constituencies being adverse, he handed in his resignation, and Lord Palmerston was invited to form a ministry. In this Ministry, which lasted as long as the Premier's life, Mr. Gladstone again filled the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer.

"During the long reign of Lord Palmerston," says Mr. Lucy, "the progress of politics attuned itself to the beat of the pulse of the aged Premier. There were wars abroad, but peace and prosperity at home, and Mr. Gladstone was able to carry out the scheme of bold but far-seeing finance which the Crimean War had interrupted five years earlier. The year 1860 was the year which saw the completion of the commercial treaty with France; a fruitful tree, which Mr. Cobden and Napoleon III planted, and which Mr. Gladstone watered. This same year was the last of the paper duty, the abolition of which was a final stroke in that labor for the freedom of the press and the extension of intelligence, begun when, in his first budget, he had made an end of the stamp duty."

The budget of 1860 is usually regarded as Mr. Gladstone's greatest achievement in finance, and the speech in which he explained it, occupying four hours in the delivery, aroused as much interest as any that had preceded it. One who heard it says: "It was admirably arranged for the purpose of awaking and keeping attention, piquing and teasing curiosity, and sustaining de-

sire to hear from the first sentence to the last. It was not a speech ; it was an oration in the form of a great state paper made eloquent, in which there was a proper restraint over the crowding ideas, the most exact accuracy in the sentences, and even in the very words chosen ; the most perfect balancing of parts, and, more than all, there were no errors of omission ; nothing was put wrongly and nothing was overlooked." With a House crowded in every corner, with the strain upon his own mental faculties, and the great physical tax implied in the management of the voice and the necessity for remaining upon his feet during this long period, " the observed of all observers," Mr. Gladstone took all as quietly, we are told, as if he had just risen to address a few observations to Mr. Speaker. Indeed, it was laughingly said that he could address a House for a whole week, and on Friday evening take a new departure, beginning with the observation, " After these preliminary remarks, I will now proceed to deal with the subject matter of my financial plan."

In the course of the session of 1860 Lord John Russell introduced a new Reform bill, which was vigorously advocated by Mr. Gladstone, but, after being read a second time without a division, Lord John withdrew it, because he saw that it was impossible to carry it through both Houses during the session.

Turning aside for a moment from the arena of politics, we may contemplate Mr. Gladstone in a different capacity, and one in which he has made several appearances during his lengthened career. On the 16th of April, 1860, he was installed as Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, receiving previous to the installation the degree of LL.D. In the address which he delivered on this occasion—a most valuable and eloquent one—he eulogized the work of the University as a great organ of preparation for after-life, described the part which it had played in the history of civilization, discussed the question as to the proper work of universities, and urged upon the students the study of ancient literature as affording the most effective intellectual training.

A few months after the delivery of this address our own Civil War broke out, and Mr. Gladstone's attitude in regard to this constitutes what is in the eyes of Americans the most vulnerable incident of his career as a statesman. Toward the close of 1862 he delivered a speech at Newcastle, in which he expressed his conviction that Jefferson Davis had already succeeded in making the Southern States of America, which were in revolt, an independent nation. Only a few weeks before Mr. Gladstone thus expressed himself, Earl Russell had written as follows to Mr. Mason, in reply to his claim to have the Confederate States recognized as a separate and independent

power : “In order to be entitled to a place among the independent nations of the earth, a State ought not only to have strength and resources for a time, but afford promise of stability and permanence. Should the Confederate States of America win that place among nations, it might be right for other nations justly to acknowledge an independence achieved by victory, and maintained by a successful resistance to all attempts to overthrow it. That time, however, has not, in the judgment of her Majesty’s Government, arrived. Her Majesty’s Government, therefore, can only hope that a peaceful termination of the present bloody and destructive contest may not be far distant.” This was undoubtedly the sentiment entertained by the great majority of reflecting Englishmen ; and such an opinion as Mr. Gladstone’s, coming from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, caused a great sensation, and pained many of his warmest political supporters, who were strongly on the side of the North in a struggle which they regarded as virtually turning upon the slavery question. Looking at the matter quite apart from all feeling for or against the North or the South, and remembering Mr. Gladstone’s position in a government the policy of which was one of neutrality, it must be confessed that his utterance was highly indiscreet. Subsequently, being interrogated on the subject on behalf of the cotton shippers, he said that his

words were no more than the expression, in rather more pointed terms, of an opinion which he had long ago stated in public, that the effort of the Northern States to subdue the Southern ones was hopeless, by reason of the resistance of the latter.

But, if the judgment thus expressed was premature and mistaken, Mr. Gladstone has since made such atonement as was possible by the frankest possible apology and retraction. Writing in August, 1867, to a New York correspondent, Mr. C. Edwards Lester, he said: "I must confess that I was wrong; that I took too much upon myself in expressing such an opinion. Yet the motive was not bad. My sympathies were then—where they had long before been, where they are now—with the whole American people. I, probably, like many Europeans, did not understand the nature and working of the American Union. I had imbibed conscientiously, if erroneously, an opinion that twenty or twenty-four millions of the North would be happier and would be stronger (of course, assuming that they would hold together) without the South than with it, and also that the negroes would be much nearer to emancipation under a Southern Government than under the old system of the Union, which had not at that date (August, 1862) been abandoned, and which always appeared to me to place the whole power of the North at the command of the slaveholding interests of the South. As far

as regards the special or separate interest of England in the matter, I, differing from many others, had always contended that it was best for our interest that the Union should be kept entire."

Moreover, as Mr. T. W. Higginson has truly observed, Mr. Gladstone's error was the error of educated England in general; and from the moment it was retracted America has had in the English Government no manlier friend. Through all the subsequent controversy over the Alabama claims, he was uniformly just and even friendly toward the United States, and this in the face of the bitterest opposition from the other party.

During the session of 1863 Mr. Gladstone spoke in favor of a measure which has only become law within the past few months, and which was interesting then chiefly as showing the advance which he was making in religious toleration. Sir Morton Peto introduced a Dissenters' Burials bill, the object of which was to enable Nonconformists to have their funerals celebrated with their own religious rites and services, and by their own ministers, in the graveyards of the Established Church. The bill was strongly opposed on its second reading by Lord Robert Cecil (now the Marquis of Salisbury), Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Gathorne Hardy. Mr. Gladstone said that he could not refuse his assent to the measure, though some portions of it were open to objection. "But," he continued, "I do not see that there is sufficient

reason, or indeed any reason at all, why, after having granted, and most properly granted, to the entire community the power of professing and practicing what form of religion they please during life, you should say to themselves or their relatives when dead : ‘ We will at the last lay our hands upon you, and not permit you to enjoy the privilege of being buried in the churchyard, where, perhaps, the ashes of your ancestors repose, or, at any rate, in the place of which you are parishioners, unless you appear there as members of the Church of England, and as members of that Church have her service read over your remains.’ That appears to me an inconsistency and an anomaly in the present state of the law, and is in the nature of a grievance.” The bill was rejected by 221 to 96.

Another speech, which exhibited still more strikingly Mr. Gladstone’s increasing liberality of sentiment, was delivered during the session of 1865 in connection with the Irish Church. Mr. Dillwyn having proposed a motion, “ That the present position of the Irish Church Establishment is unsatisfactory, and calls for the early attention of her Majesty’s Government,” Mr. Gladstone rose and said that, although the Government were unable to agree to the resolution, they were not prepared to deny the abstract truth of the former part of it. They could not assert that the present position of the Establishment was satisfactory.

At the close of a lengthy speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he could come to no other conclusion than that the Irish Church, as she then stood, was in a false position. It was much more difficult, however, to decide upon the practical aspect of the question, and no one had ventured to propose the remedy required for the existing state of things. This question raised a whole nest of political problems; for, while the vast majority of the Irish people were opposed to the maintenance of large and liberal endowments for a fragment of the population, they repudiated any desire to appropriate these endowments, and firmly rejected all idea of receiving a state provision for themselves. How could the Government, in view of these facts, substitute a satisfactory for an admittedly unsatisfactory state of things? They were unable to do so. Consequently, "we feel that we ought to decline to follow the honorable gentleman into the lobby, and declare that it is the duty of the Government to give their early attention to the subject; because, if we gave a vote to that effect, we should be committing one of the gravest offenses of which a Government could be guilty—namely, giving a deliberate and solemn promise to the country, which promise it would be out of our power to fulfill." The debate was adjourned, but was not resumed during the session.

This question, however, was rapidly pressing

forward for settlement—how rapidly Mr. Gladstone himself seemed not to be aware of at the time. Yet the act of Disestablishment was to proceed from his own hand within a very brief period.

The gradual but steady growth in ecclesiastical and political liberty revealed by these and other speeches was creating a breach between Mr. Gladstone and his constituents, which showed itself in 1865, when Parliament was dissolved preparatory to a general election. Offering himself for reëlection at Oxford, he was rejected, after a spirited contest, in favor of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, now Lord Cranbrook, a bigoted and uncompromising Conservative, who was not likely to forfeit the confidence of his supporters by any eccentricities of genius.

This event caused a profound sensation, and the "Times" expressed the general sentiment of the educated public in saying: "The enemies of the University will make the most of her disgrace. It has hitherto been supposed that a learned constituency was to some extent exempt from the vulgar motives of party spirit, and capable of forming a higher estimate of statesmanship than common tradesmen or tenant-farmers. It will now stand on record that they have deliberately sacrificed a representative who combined the very highest qualifications, moral and intellectual, for an academical seat, to party spirit, and party spirit alone. Mr. Gladstone's brilliant public

career, his great academical distinctions and literary attainments, his very subtlety and sympathy with ideas for their own sake, mark him out beyond all living men for such a position. However progressive in purely secular politics, he has ever shown himself a staunch and devoted Churchman wherever Church doctrine or ecclesiastical rights were concerned. . . . Henceforth, Mr. Gladstone will belong to the country, but no longer to the University. Those Oxford influences and traditions which have so deeply colored his views, and so greatly interfered with his better judgment, must gradually lose their hold on him." A yet more emphatic condemnation came from the "Daily News," the organ of advanced Liberal opinion : "Mr. Gladstone's career as a statesman will certainly not be arrested, nor Mr. Gathorne Hardy's capacity be enlarged by the number of votes which Tory squires or Tory parsons may inflict upon Lord Derby's cheerful and fluent subaltern, or withhold from Lord Palmerston's brilliant colleague. The late Sir Robert Peel was but the chief of a party until, admonished by one ostracism, he became finally emancipated by another. Then, as now, the statesman who was destined to give up to mankind what was never meant for the barren service of a party, could say to the honest bigots who rejected him—

‘ I banish you :
There is a world elsewhere.’

Mediocrity will not be turned into genius, honest and good-natured insignificance into force, fluency into eloquence, if the resident and non-resident Toryism of the University of Oxford should prefer the safe and sound Mr. Hardy to the illustrious Minister whom all Europe envies us, whose name is a household word in every political assembly in the world."

England, in one geographical section or another of it, has always taken care that it shall not be deprived of the advantage of Mr. Gladstone's presence in its Parliament. "On this occasion," says Mr. Lucy, "it was South Lancashire which, perceiving his peril at Oxford, voluntarily offered to secure him a seat. From the University he hastened to the manufacturing town, and stood before the men of Manchester, as he said, 'unmuzzled.' Even the dullest politicians recognized the significance of the events so aptly described in this memorable phrase. As long as Mr. Gladstone was politically associated with Oxford, the Alma Mater which he loved with changeless affection, there was a possibility that he might successfully resist the silent forces that were leading him to a more uncompromising Liberalism. When Oxford snapped the chain, he was free to go whither he listed. The end would, doubtless, have arrived sooner or later, and he would have retired from Oxford because he was bent upon freeing the Irish Church, just as in an earlier stage of his career he

had retired from Newark because he was about to join in an assault on Protection. Sooner or later the unmuzzling must have been accomplished. Oxford elected to make it sooner by several years."

X.

THE REFORM BILLS OF 1866-67.

THE character of Lord Palmerston was a sort of pledge that the question of Parliamentary Reform would remain "hung up" during his tenure of office; and, in fact, only once during his administration was any step attempted to be taken in that direction. At length, in the autumn of 1865, Lord Palmerston died, and "the pent-up flood of Liberal life rushed down like a cataract." Earl Russell, the Nestor of Reform, succeeded to the vacant Premiership, and Mr. Gladstone, of course retaining his ministerial position as Chancellor of the Exchequer, became Leader of the House of Commons.

Of the way in which Mr. Gladstone fulfilled the duties of his new position, Mr. Molesworth gives us a glimpse: "Amidst all the manifold questions which engaged the attention of Parliament during this session, Mr. Gladstone's quality as leader of the House was fully tried. Like Lord

Palmerston, he generally remained in the House from the commencement of the sittings to the close of them, however late the hour of adjournment might be. But he did not, like him, slumber during the greater part of the sittings ; on the contrary, he listened attentively to every speaker, answered fully every question put to him, spoke on every subject, and exhibited a sensitive and conscientious anxiety to discharge his functions as leader of the House, which his friends feared would soon disable him from the performance of the responsible duties which belonged to him, and with his fall precipitate that of the Government, of which he was the mainstay."

At the opening of the session of 1866 the Queen's speech intimated that the question of Parliamentary Reform would receive immediate attention, and in redemption of this promise a new Franchise bill was introduced on March 13th. Discussing the circumstances of this event, Mr. Molesworth says : "If the Ministry had looked merely to its own stability, or to its chances of retention of office, it would not have introduced a Reform bill during the first session of a newly elected Parliament, the members of which were still smarting under the recollection of the contests in which they had been engaged, the dangers they had run, the expenses they had already incurred, and the demands on their purses they had still to meet, and who might, therefore, be ex-

pected to regard with little favor a measure the effect of which would be speedily to send them back to their constituents, and compel them again to run the risks and incur the expenses that were so fresh in their remembrance. There can be no doubt that this was the chief cause of the disfavor with which the proposition of the Government was regarded by many of those who numbered themselves among the supporters of the Administration, and that, if Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone had waited another session or two before introducing their bill, it would have met with a much more favorable reception, and probably have been carried through without much change or difficulty. Nor were there wanting among their colleagues men who, having been introduced into the Cabinet by Lord Palmerston, and sharing his feelings with regard to the question of Reform, acknowledged, with regret, that it was a question the settlement of which could not be much longer delayed, but wished that it should not be prematurely pressed. There can be no doubt that under ordinary circumstances Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone would have yielded to considerations based on such strong reasons of expediency. But they felt, and justly felt, that the question had already been hung up too long ; that the delay which had occurred with regard to it was damaging to our institutions and to the character of our public men ; and, therefore, that it

was not the time to listen to mere considerations of prudence or expediency, but to show the country that there were public men who valued consistency more than place, and were determined, come of it what might, to redeem their pledges in reference to this great and long-delayed question."

Upon Mr. Gladstone, as leader of the House of Commons, fell the task of introducing the bill, and bearing the brunt of the battle which raged around it. The bill was in reality a very moderate one, and bore unmistakably upon its face the proof that it was the result of a compromise within the Cabinet; but by the more fanatical Conservatives it was regarded as a dangerous step in the direction of democracy. Mr. Disraeli led the united Conservative party in an attack upon it of unprecedented fierceness and obstinacy; but the most effective opposition to the measure came from within the ranks of the Liberal party itself. Mr. Lowe, fresh from the insufficient glories of a colonial legislature, assailed Mr. Gladstone in a series of speeches which established his reputation and raised him to the first rank of Parliamentary debaters. Another prominent Liberal who proved recreant was Mr. Horsman, who described Mr. Gladstone's opening speech as "another bid for power, another promise made to be broken, another political fraud and Parliamentary juggle." This diatribe drew from Mr. Bright a crushing and mem-

orable retort. Mr. Horsman, he said, had “retired into what may be called his political Cave of Adullam, to which he invited every one who was in distress, and every one who was discontented. He has long been anxious to found a party in this House; and there is scarcely a member at this end of the House who is able to address us with effect, or to take much part, whom he has not tried to bring over to his party and his cabal. At last he has succeeded in hooking the right honorable gentleman the member for Calne, Mr. Lowe. I know it was the opinion many years ago of a member of the Cabinet that two men could make a party. When a party is formed of two men so amiable and so disinterested as the two right honorable gentlemen, we may hope to see for the first time in Parliament a party perfectly harmonious and distinguished by mutual and unbroken trust. But there is one difficulty which it is impossible to remove. This party of two is like the Scotch terrier that was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail.” This sally, which excited immoderate laughter at the time, remains one of the happiest examples of Parliamentary retort and *badinage*.

Mr. Disraeli, in a speech of great bitterness, reproached Mr. Gladstone for his changes of opinion, and accused him of “Americanizing our institutions.” But the most striking of all the incidents of this celebrated debate was the closing

speech of Mr. Gladstone—a speech which is conceded to have been one of the most eloquent that has been heard in Parliament since the great days of Pitt and Fox. Rising at one o'clock in the morning to conclude a legislative battle which had begun a fortnight before, he proceeded to rebut the charges which had been made against the bill. “At last,” he said, alluding to a statement by Mr. Disraeli, “we have obtained a declaration from an authoritative source that a bill which, in a country with five millions of adult males, proposes to add to a limited constituency 200,000 of the middle class and 200,000 of the working class, is, in the judgment of the leader of the Tory party, a bill to reconstruct the Constitution upon American principles.” Another point upon which Mr. Disraeli had assailed him was dealt with in the following famous and impressive passage :

“The right honorable gentleman, secure in the recollection of his own consistency, has taunted me with the errors of my boyhood. When he addressed the honorable member for Westminster, he showed his magnanimity by declaring that he would not take the philosopher to task for what he wrote twenty-five years ago ; but when he caught one who, thirty-six years ago just emerged from boyhood, and still an undergraduate at Oxford, had expressed an opinion adverse to the Reform bill of 1832, of which he had so long and bitterly repented, then the right honorable gentleman could not

resist the temptation. He, a Parliamentary leader of twenty years' standing, is so ignorant of the House of Commons that he positively thought he got a Parliamentary advantage by exhibiting me as an opponent of the Reform bill of 1832. As the right honorable gentleman has exhibited me, let me exhibit myself. It is true, I deeply regret it, but I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning; every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth; with Canning I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, and in the character which he gave to our policy abroad; with Canning I rejoiced in the opening which he made toward the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations; with Canning, and under the shadow of that great name, and under the shadow of the yet more venerable name of Burke, I grant my youthful mind and imagination were impressed just the same as the mature mind of the right honorable gentleman is now impressed. I had conceived that fear and alarm of the first Reform bill in the days of my undergraduate career at Oxford which the right honorable gentleman now feels; and the only difference between us is this—I thank him for bringing it out—that, having those views, I moved the Oxford Union Debating Society to express them clearly, plainly, forcibly, in downright English, and that the right honorable gentleman is still obliged to skulk under the cover of the amendment of the noble lord. I envy him not one particle of the polemical advantage which he has gained by his discreet reference to the proceedings of the Oxford Union Debating Society in the year of grace 1831. My position, sir, in regard to the Liberal party is in all points the opposite of Earl Russell's. . . . I have none of the claims he

possesses. I came among you an outcast from those with whom I associated, driven from them, I admit, by no arbitrary act, but by the slow and resistless forces of conviction. I came among you, to make use of the legal phraseology, *in forma pauperis*. I had nothing to offer you but faithful and honorable service. You received me as Dido received the shipwrecked Æneas—

‘Ejectum littore, egentem
Accepi,’

and I only trust you may not hereafter at any time have to complete the sentence in regard to me—

‘Et regni demens, in parte locavi.’

You received me with kindness, indulgence, generosity, and I may even say with some measure of confidence. And the relation between us has assumed such a form that you can never be my debtors, but that I must for ever be in your debt. It is not from me, under such circumstances, that any word will proceed that can savor of the character which the right honorable gentleman imputes to the conduct of the Government with respect to the present bill.”

An old and highly esteemed member of the Liberal party (Mr. Philips, member for Bury) has told us that the delivery of this passage brought tears into his eyes; and he added, “I was not ashamed to own it, when I observed that several friends near me were similarly moved.”

But the finest passage in the speech—perhaps the finest in all Mr. Gladstone’s speeches—was the peroration :

“Sir, we are assailed; this bill is in a state of crisis and of peril, and the Government along with it. We stand or fall with it, as has been declared by my noble friend Lord Russell. We stand with it now; we may fall with it a short time hence. If we do so fall, we, or others in our places, shall rise with it hereafter. I shall not attempt to measure with precision the forces that are to be arrayed against us in the coming issue. Perhaps the great division of to-night is not to be the last, but only the first of a series of divisions. At some point of the contest you may possibly succeed. You may drive us from our seats. You may slay, you may bury, the measure that we have introduced. But we will write upon its gravestone for an epitaph this line, with certain confidence in its fulfillment:

‘*Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor.*’

You can not fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onward in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of these debates does not for a moment impede or disturb, those great social forces are against you; they work with us; they are marshaled in our support. And the banner which we now carry in the fight, though, perhaps, at some moment of the struggle it may droop over our sinking heads, yet will float again in the eye of heaven, and will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not distant victory.”

The immediately following division took place amid scenes of the greatest excitement. “The Speaker having put the question, members with-

drew. After voting, the 'Ayes' and the 'Noes' gradually found their way to the seats on the floor and in the galleries. A spectator, describing the memorable scene, says that in about twenty minutes a strange, electric-like agitation began to manifest itself. Mr. Walpole whispered to Mr. Disraeli the word 'Six.' Shortly afterward Mr. Brand appeared, and it was known that the strength of the Opposition was larger than the Liberals had feared or the Tories had hoped. Mr. Childers rushed up the floor to the Treasury bench, and, in a tone of disappointment, uttered the word 'Five' to Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Adam, the Government teller, now emerged upon the scene. The House was charged with electricity like a vast thunder-cloud ; and now the spark was about to be applied. Strangers rose in their seats, the crowd at the bar pushed half way up the House, the Royal Princes leaned forward in their standing-places, and all was confusion. The tellers walked up the floor and made due obeisance to the chair. Then, loudly and distinctly, Mr. Brand read out the numbers as follows : Ayes to the right, 318 ; Noes to the left, 313. The majority for the Government was accordingly five." What followed is best described in the language of the spectator just mentioned :

"Hardly had the words left the teller's lips than there arose a wild, raging, mad-brained shout from floor to gallery, such as had never been

heard in the present House of Commons. Dozens of half-frantic Tories stood up in their seats, madly waved their hats, and hurrahed at the top of their voices. Strangers in both galleries clapped their hands. The Adullamites on the ministerial benches, carried away by the delirium of the moment, waved their hats in sympathy with the Opposition, and cheered as loudly as any. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech, had politely performed the operation of holding a candle to Lucifer (Mr. Lowe); and he, the prince of the revolt, the leader, instigator, and prime mover of the conspiracy, stood up in the excitement of the moment—flushed, triumphant, and avenged. His hair, brighter than silver, shone and glistened in the brilliant light. His complexion had deepened into something like bishop's purple. His small, regular, and almost woman-like features, always instinct with intelligence, now mantled with the liveliest pleasure. He took off his hat, waved it in wide and triumphant circles over the heads of the very men who had just gone into the lobby against him. 'Who would have thought there was so much in Bob Lowe?' said one member to another; 'why, he was one of the cleverest men in Lord Palmerston's Government!' 'All this comes of Lord Russell's sending for Goschen,' was the reply. 'Disraeli did not half so signally avenge himself against Peel,' interposed another; 'Lowe has very

nearly broken up the Liberal party.' These may seem to be exaggerated estimates of the situation ; but in that moment of agitation and excitement I dare say a hundred sillier things were said and agreed to. Anyhow, there he stood, that usually cold, undemonstrative, intellectual, white-headed, red-faced, venerable-looking arch-conspirator ! shouting himself hoarse, like the ring-leader of schoolboys at a successful barring-out, and amply repaid at that moment for all Skye-terrier witticisms and any amount of popular obloquy ! But, see, the Chancellor of the Exchequer lifts up his hand to bespeak silence, as if he had something to say in regard to the result of the division. But the more the great orator lifts his hand beseechingly, the more the cheers are renewed and the hats waved. At length the noise comes to an end by the process of exhaustion, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer rises. Then there is a universal hush, and you might hear a pin drop. He simply says, 'Sir, I propose to fix the committee for Monday, and I will then state the order of business.' It was twilight, brightening into day, when we got out into the welcome fresh air of New Palace Yard. Early as was the hour, about three hundred persons were assembled to see the members come out, and to cheer the friends of the bill. It was a night to be long remembered. The House of Commons had listened to the grandest oration ever yet delivered

by the greatest orator of his age ; and had then to ask itself how it happened that the Liberal party had been disunited, and a Liberal majority of sixty 'muddled away.' "

The division is said to have been the largest that ever occurred—out of a total membership of 658, including the Speaker, 631 had voted. And the division list revealed how and why the Liberal majority had been "muddled away." With the Government only two Conservatives had voted, but against them there were arrayed 31 Liberals (Adullamites) and 282 Conservatives. The cause of Reform had been betrayed by its professed friends.

"The Opposition" (to quote again from Mr. Molesworth's excellent History) "had good grounds for their exultation, and the Ministerialists for their depression ; for the victory of the Government was worse than a defeat. Their majority was so small as hardly to leave a prospect of carrying the measure ; and yet, having a majority, they were obliged, after all the pledges they had given, to proceed with the bill, to dissolve, or to resign. Intense interest was felt to know which of these courses they would adopt. The consequence was that, at the time of the commencement of business, on Monday afternoon, the House was crowded, in anticipation of a statement which Mr. Gladstone had announced that he intended to make. He rose shortly before

five o'clock, and informed the House that the Government would proceed with the bill; that on Monday evening next leave would be asked to introduce the Distribution-of-seats bill; that bills for Scotland and Ireland would be brought in the same evening, and would be proceeded with at the same time with the Franchise bill. The House received these announcements in silence. The decisive battle between the two parties was still to be fought.

“On Monday, the 7th of May, the struggle took a new shape. On that day the whole of the Government plan of reform was laid before the House. Besides the Franchise bill, which, as we have already seen, had been very fully discussed, the promised bill for the redistribution of seats, and the Scotch and the Irish bills were brought forward. . . . On Monday, May 14th, the Redistribution bill was read a second time, in a House consisting of some nine or ten members. Mr. Gladstone announced at the close of the debate, in reply to a question put by Sir S. Northcote, that he would, on behalf of the Government, accede to a proposition to combine the Franchise and Redistribution bills, and submit them to one committee on that day fortnight. Accordingly, at the specified time, the two bills were committed together, Mr. Gladstone proposing, and the committee accepting, some amendments which were required in order to effect their amalgamation.

We will not weary our readers by tracing the progress of the bill through committee. Suffice it, therefore, to say, that after a defeat on a motion of Sir R. Knightley, that 'it be an instruction to the committee that they have power to make provision for the better prevention of bribery and corruption,' the measure floated on till Monday, 18th of June, when the clause was reached which enacted a rental franchise in boroughs. Lord Dunkellin, usually a supporter of the Government, moved as an amendment on this clause that rating should be substituted for rental, on the ground that this alteration would oppose an insurmountable 'barrier to universal suffrage,' while it would admit the best qualified of the working class to the franchise. On this motion the House divided, and the numbers were :

For the amendment.	315
Against	304

Majority against the Government.... 11

The announcement of these numbers was received by the Opposition and the Cave with shouts even more deafening than those which had been raised when it was found that the second reading had been carried by a majority of five only."

On the following day, the 19th of June, Earl Russell in the Lords and Mr. Gladstone in the Commons announced that, in consequence of their

late defeat, the Government had felt it to be their duty to make a communication to her Majesty; and on the 26th Earl Russell stated that the Ministers had tendered their resignations, to which they had adhered, notwithstanding an appeal from the Queen to reconsider their determination. The Earl of Derby, therefore, though his party was in a hopeless minority in the House of Commons, formed a ministry, with Mr. Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House, Lord Stanley as Foreign Secretary, and Sir Stafford Northcote as President of the Board of Trade.

Though thus defeated and arrested in Parliament, the cause of Reform was not allowed to sleep. Those who regarded themselves as unjustly excluded from the franchise became convinced that their claims would never be conceded by the Legislature unless, as in 1832, they took the matter into their own hands, and showed in an unmistakable manner to both friends and foes that they were thoroughly in earnest, and that, whatever Conservative reaction there might be among the enfranchised classes, it did not extend to those who were denied a share in the election of representatives to the House of Commons. A great Reform league was accordingly formed for the purpose of holding outdoor meetings and otherwise agitating in favor of the measure from which it took its name. On the 23d of July a riot occurred in Hyde Park in consequence of resistance

by the Government to a proposed demonstration of the league. On the 27th of August a monster meeting was held at Birmingham, the number attending being estimated at 250,000; and at Manchester another demonstration was attended by about 150,000 persons.

During the entire autumn and winter the agitation was industriously prosecuted; and by the time of the meeting of Parliament (in February, 1867) the Ministry had become convinced that neither the people nor the House of Commons would allow the question to remain any longer in abeyance—"the Ministry could not have retained office a single fortnight after the commencement of the session if it had declined to deal with it." Yet there were obvious difficulties in the way of a party, that had all along dreaded and opposed any extension of the suffrage, taking the lead in a measure of Parliamentary reform which should meet and satisfy demands that, as usual, had grown with agitation. In the accomplishment of his object, Mr. Disraeli's first task was, as he himself said, "to educate our party up to it."

His education was so effective that even the Earl of Derby consented to advocate what he characterized as "a leap in the dark"; but the Conservative party was not without its revolvers and its Cave of Adullam. Three of the most prominent members of the Cabinet resigned, and

several of his quondam supporters assailed Mr. Disraeli in the bitterest language of invective. Mr. Beresford Hope declared that "sink or swim, dissolution or no dissolution, whether he was in the next Parliament or out of it, he for one, with his whole heart and conscience, would vote against the Asian mystery." And Lord Cranborne (now the Marquis of Salisbury, and Lord Beaconsfield's most trusted lieutenant) said: "I desire to protest, in the most earnest language I am capable of using, against the political morality on which the manœuvres of this year have been based. If you borrow your political ethics from the ethics of the political adventurer, you may depend upon it, the whole of your representative institutions will crumble beneath your feet."

Mr. Disraeli introduced his measure on the 18th of March, and it was so unsatisfactory that it speedily became apparent that its rejection was inevitable, Mr. Gladstone pointing out nine defects which called for amendment, and evidently having the sense of the House with him. Perceiving the fate that awaited him, Mr. Disraeli allowed it to be seen that he was "squeezable"; and, in fact, so many changes were effected in the bill during its passage through committee that it was completely transformed. On the 15th of July the bill as amended was read a third time in the House of Commons, and on the 6th of August passed the House of Lords.

Thus Mr. Disraeli, having accomplished the unprecedented feat of "educating" his own party up to the support of a measure opposed to all their principles and traditions, "dished the Whigs" by passing a Reform bill exceeding in its democratic tendencies any that had ever been proposed by a responsible Liberal Ministry.

Shortly after this remarkable achievement (in February, 1868) Mr. Disraeli became leader of the Conservative party and Prime Minister of England, the Earl of Derby having retired on the plea of ill health.

XI.

ELECTORAL STRUGGLE OVER THE IRISH CHURCH QUESTION.

THE opening of the session of 1868 witnessed a state of things said to be without a parallel in the history of England—a Ministry holding the reins of power in spite of the fact that its supporters were in a decided minority in the House of Commons. Mr. Bouverie, a Liberal, calling attention to the condition of parties, asked: "Why are the Conservatives now in power? Simply because the Liberal party, though an undoubted majority in this House, and representing

a vast preponderance of opinion in the country, does not deserve to be called a party. That may be an unpalatable truth, but it is a truth, notwithstanding. We have leaders that won't lead, and followers that won't follow. Instead of an organized party, we are little better than a rabble."

This reproach, though justified at the time it was uttered, was destined to be speedily removed. Other progressive questions besides that of Parliamentary Reform were pressing for solution, and soon one came to the front which united the Liberal party to a degree previously unknown, and aroused the keenest popular interest. Mr. Maguire moved that the House resolve itself into a committee to take the condition of Ireland into immediate consideration. The debate upon this motion has been called "the most important of the generation," and toward the close of it, on the 16th of March, Mr. Gladstone struck the first blow in the struggle that was destined to end in the disestablishment of the Irish Church. He complained that the Ministerial programme of the session's work failed to realize the grave fact that a crisis in the Irish question had been reached. Ireland, he said, had an account with England which had endured for centuries, and Englishmen had not done enough to place themselves in the right. Coming to appeals for religious equality, he affirmed that it must be established, difficult as the operation might be ;

but he condemned the principle of leveling up. As to the appeals which had been made urging the Irish people to loyalty and to union, Mr. Gladstone said that was his object, too ; but with regard to the means the differences were still profound, and it was idle, it was mockery, to use words unless they could sustain them by corresponding substances. They must give the unreserved devotion of their efforts ; and, after warning Mr. Disraeli that, unless he had something more satisfactory to say on the subject of justice to Ireland than his colleagues, this question would immediately press for settlement, he concluded as follows :

- “If we are prudent men, I hope we shall endeavor, as far as in us lies, to make some provision for a contingent, a doubtful, and probably a dangerous future. If we be chivalrous men, I trust we shall endeavor to wipe away all those stains which the civilized world has for ages seen, or seemed to see, on the shield of England in her treatment of Ireland. If we be compassionate men, I hope we shall now, once for all, listen to the tale of woe which comes from her, and the reality of which, if not its justice, is testified by the continuous migration of her people—that we shall endeavor to

‘Raze out the written troubles from her brain,
Pluck from her memory the rooted sorrow.’

But, above all, if we be just men, we shall go forward in the name of truth and right, bearing this in mind—that, when the case is proved, and the hour is come, justice delayed is justice denied.”

“This speech,” says Mr. Smith, “excited feelings of consternation among the Ministerialists. Mr. Disraeli bewailed his own unhappy fate, at the commencement of his career of Prime Minister, at finding himself face to face with the imperious necessity of settling out of hand an account seven centuries old. He complained that all the elements of the Irish crisis had existed while Mr. Gladstone was in office, but no attempt had been made to deal with them. The spirit of the age was not, he asserted, opposed to endowments, as had been laid down by Mr. Bright—who, with the aid of the philosophers, had now converted Mr. Gladstone to the same opinion. For himself, he was personally in favor of ecclesiastical endowments, and strongly objected to the destruction of the Irish Church. Mr. Maguire, being urged thereto by Mr. Gladstone, withdrew his motion.

“But, with the express declarations of the leader of the Opposition, the Irish Church question had moved forward an enormous stage. To go back now was impossible, and to stand still was equally impossible. Mr. Gladstone’s address became the basis of action for the Liberal party, and the country speedily took up the cry of disestablishment. The right honorable gentleman himself, not shrinking from following up the policy he had indicated, with all convenient speed, laid upon the table of the House of Commons the following resolutions upon the Irish Church, which he

intended to move in committee of the whole House :

“1. That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an Establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property.

“2. That, subject to the foregoing considerations, it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage, and to confine the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity, or involving individual rights, pending the final decision of Parliament.

“3. That an humble address be presented to her Majesty, humbly to pray that, with a view to the purposes aforesaid, her Majesty will be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of Parliament her interest in the temporalities, in archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland and in the custody thereof.”

The Government vigorously opposed the measure, Lord Stanley moving an amendment to the effect that in the opinion of the House any proposition tending to the disestablishment or disendowment of the United Church in Ireland ought to be reserved for the decision of a new Parliament. On this motion battle was joined, and on the 30th of March the conflict began with a power-

ful speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone in a House crowded with eager listeners. The titles of the acts relating to the Church Establishment, the 5th article of the Act of Union, and the coronation oath of the Sovereign, having been read from the table, Mr. Gladstone remarked that these extracts from existing laws would serve to remind the House that they were about to enter upon a solemn duty. Having indicated his method of procedure, he proposed—if the House should declare its opinion that the Irish Establishment should cease to exist—that the cessation should be effected in a manner worthy of the nation, affording ample consideration and satisfaction to every proprietary and vested right. The residue, after satisfying every just claim, should be treated as an Irish fund, applicable to the exclusive benefit of Ireland. Both the Liberal party and the Conservative party, he said, were justified hitherto in not taking up the subject, for previous to this time no state of public feeling or opinion would have enabled this great question to be opened on the wide basis which it required. He denied that the disendowment of the Irish Church would be dangerous to the English Establishment. What was dangerous to the latter was to hold her in communion with a state of things politically dangerous and socially unjust. The existence of the Irish Church was not necessary for the maintenance of Protestantism in Ireland. Though the

census of 1861 showed a small proportionate increase of Protestants, the rate of conversion was so small that it would take 1,500 or 2,000 years to effect an entire conversion, if it went on at the same rate. The final arrangements in this matter might be left to a reformed Parliament, but he proposed that they should prevent by legislation this session the growing of a new crop of vested interests. There had been a connection between England and Ireland for seven hundred years, but it had been marked by a succession of storms and temporary calms. He called upon the House to settle its account with the sister island by removing the whole cause of dispute. He thus eloquently concluded his address :

“There are many who think that to lay hands upon the national Church Establishment of a country is a profane and unhallowed act. I respect that feeling. I sympathize with it. I sympathize with it, while I think it my duty to overcome and repress it. But, if it be an error, it is an error entitled to respect. There is something in the idea of a national establishment of religion, of a solemn appropriation of a part of the commonwealth for conferring upon all who are ready to receive it what we know to be an inestimable benefit ; of saving that portion of the inheritance from private selfishness, in order to extract from it, if we can, pure and unmingled advantages of the highest order for the population at large. There is something in this so attractive that it is an image that must always command the homage of the many. It is somewhat like the kingly ghost in ‘Hamlet,’ of which one of the characters of Shakespeare says :

‘ We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the show of violence ;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.’

But, sir, this is to view a religious establishment upon one side only, upon what I may call the ethereal side. It has likewise a side of earth ; and here I can not do better than quote some lines written by the present Archbishop of Dublin, at a time when his genius was devoted to the muses. He said, in speaking of mankind :

‘ We who did our lineage high
Draw from beyond the starry sky,
Are yet upon the other side,
To earth and to its dust allied.’

And so the Church Establishment, regarded in its theory and in its aim, is beautiful and attractive. Yet what is it but an appropriation of public property—an appropriation of the fruits of labor and of skill to certain purposes? and unless these purposes are fulfilled, that appropriation can not be justified. Therefore, sir, I can not but feel that we must set aside fears which thrust themselves upon the imagination, and act upon the sober dictates of our judgment. I think it has been shown that the cause for action is strong—not for precipitate action, not for action beyond our powers, but for such action as the opportunities of the times and the condition of Parliament, if there be but a ready will, will amply and easily admit of. If I am asked as to my expectations of the issue of this struggle, I begin by frankly avowing that I, for one, would not have entered into it unless I believed that the final hour was about to sound—

‘ Venit summa dirs et ineluctabile fatum.’

And I hope that the noble lord will forgive me if I say that before Friday last I thought that the thread of the remaining life of the Irish Established Church was short, but that, since Friday last, when at half past four o'clock in the afternoon the noble lord stood at that table, I have regarded it as being shorter still. The issue is not in our hands. What we had and have to do is to consider well and deeply before we take the first step in an engagement such as this; but, having entered into the controversy, there and then to acquit ourselves like men, and to use every effort to remove what still remains of the scandals and calamities in the relations which exist between England and Ireland, and to make our best efforts at least to fill up with the cement of human concord the noble fabric of the British Empire."

In the debate which followed, Lord Stanley, Lord Cranborne, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Disraeli made forcible speeches; and then Mr. Gladstone made a closing address, in which he said that he did not conceal his intention to separate Church from State in Ireland, and that he asked the expiring Parliament to pronounce an opinion which would clear the way for its successor. In the division the numbers were—for Lord Stanley's amendment, 270; against, 331—majority against the Government, 61. On the second division for going into committee, there appeared—for the motion, 328; against, 272—majority for Mr. Gladstone's motion, 56.

This emphatic expression of opinion within the House of Commons was reflected out of doors,

in a series of great public meetings, which were held in London and the provinces to express sympathy with the agitation ; and both sides prepared actively for a conflict which it was felt must prove decisive.

Meanwhile, the issue in the House had only been fairly joined, not fought out ; but, on the 30th of April, after a discussion extending over eleven nights, Mr. Gladstone's first resolution was carried by a majority of 65. The usual course for Government after such a defeat was either to resign or to dissolve Parliament ; but Mr. Disraeli resolved to postpone dissolution until the autumn, and in the mean time to carry through such measures for Scotland and Ireland as would enable the new Parliament to be elected under the provisions of the new Reform bill. Mr. Gladstone's second and third resolutions were passed without a division, and on May 14th he obtained leave to bring in a bill to prevent for a limited time new appointments in the Irish Church, and to restrain for the same period the proceedings of the ecclesiastical commissions for Ireland. On the 22d, after a lengthy discussion, this suspensory bill was read a second time, the majority in favor of it being 54. Subsequently, the bill was thrown out in the House of Lords, but this was now of small consequence, as the great question was to be remitted for settlement to the constituencies. On the 31st of July Parliament was prorogued,

with a view to its dissolution in November, and on the 11th of November writs were issued for a new election.

The general election which ensued was decidedly the most remarkable that had occurred since that which followed the passing of the Reform Act of 1832; and its most remarkable incident was the defeat of Mr. Gladstone for South Lancashire. This was accomplished by tremendous exertions on the part of his opponents, concentrated with all the power of personal dislike and party hatred; but the effect was of small practical importance, for, while the contest was yet undecided, Greenwich returned him without expense and without solicitation on his part. Other prominent Liberals experienced unexpected defeats—notably John Stuart Mill in Westminster, and the Marquis of Hartington in North Lancashire—but in the country at large an enormous preponderance of Liberal feeling was manifested, and, when the elections were completed, it was evident that the party policy would be supported by a majority of something like 120 in the new Parliament.

The national verdict being so unmistakable, Mr. Disraeli did not wait for the meeting of Parliament, but promptly resigned; and on the 4th of December the Queen sent for Mr. Gladstone and authorized him to form a ministry. “Few governments,” says Mr. Molesworth, “have ever been more popular than this administration at the

time of its accession to office. This was chiefly due to the presence in it of Messrs. Gladstone and Bright, in whom the overwhelming majority of the nation had great confidence, and who, on every occasion in which they appeared in public, were objects of the warmest demonstrations of the favor and confidence with which they were regarded."

XII.

"THE GOLDEN AGE OF LIBERALISM."

At the opening of the session of Parliament for 1869 Mr. Gladstone found himself at the head of an irresistible majority in the House of Commons—"a Prime Minister personally more powerful than any who had held the reins of State since the palmiest days of Sir Robert Peel." Much curiosity was felt as to what he would do with his power; and there were not wanting those who predicted that Mr. Gladstone at the head of the Government would be less eager to deal with so difficult a question as the Irish Church than Mr. Gladstone at the head of a turbulent Opposition. Such prophecies, however, were speedily falsified. The Queen's speech promised that the ecclesiastical arrangements of Ireland would be brought

under the consideration of the House at a very early date ; and promptly on the 1st of March Mr. Gladstone introduced his great measure for the disestablishment and partial disendowment of the Irish Church.

Referring to the speech in which he unfolded his scheme, Mr. Wemyss Reid says : " For three hours did that speech flow on without interruption ; it was long enough to have filled a goodly sized volume, and yet from first to last the Premier had each one of his countless figures and facts in its proper place ; and never halted or stumbled for a moment while performing his tremendous task." Mr. Disraeli himself afterward described the speech as eloquent, full, adequate, and not containing one unnecessary word ; and the " Daily Telegraph " of the next day said : " With that consummate skill which in old days made a fine art of finance and taught us all the romance of the revenue, Mr. Gladstone made his statistics ornamental, and deftly wove the stiffest strings of figures into the web of his exposition. Scarcely even so much as glancing at his notes, he advanced with an oratorical step, which positively never once faltered from exordium to peroration of his amazing task ; omitting nothing, slurring nothing, confusing nothing ; but pouring from his prodigious faculty of thought, memory, and speech an explanation so lucid that none of all the many points which he made was obscure to any of his listeners when

he had finished. And, charged as the speech necessarily was with hard and stern matter of fact and figure, the intense earnestness, the sincere satisfaction of the speaker at the act of concord and justice he was inaugurating, gave such elasticity and play to his genius that nowhere was the clause so dry or the calculation so involved, but some gentle phrase of respect, some high invocation of principle, some bright illumination of the theme from actual life, some graceful compliment to his hearers, lightened the passage of these mountains of statistics, and kept the House spellbound by that rich and energetic voice. This praise may seem extravagant; but, though Mr. Gladstone has done many things of marvellous intellectual and oratorical force, his exposition last evening of the measure from which will assuredly date the pacification and happiness of Ireland was a Parliamentary achievement unparalleled even by himself."

The peroration of the speech is worth reproducing, since it has always been regarded as one of the orator's happiest efforts :

"I do not know in what country so great a change, so great a transition, has been proposed for the ministers of a religious communion who have enjoyed for many ages the preferred position of an Established Church. I can well understand that to many in the Irish Establishment such a change appears to be nothing less than ruin and destruction; from the height on which

they now stand the future is to them an abyss, and their fears recall the words used in 'King Lear,' when Edgar endeavors to persuade Gloster that he has fallen over the cliffs of Dover, and says :

' Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fallen ;
Thy life's a miracle !'

And yet but a little while after the old man is relieved from his delusion, and finds he has not fallen at all. So I trust that when, instead of the fictitious and adventitious aid on which we have too long taught the Irish Establishment to lean, it should come to place its trust in its own resources, in its own great mission, in all that it can draw from the energy of its ministers and its members, and the high hopes and promises of the Gospel that it teaches, it will find that it has entered upon a new era of existence—an era bright with hope and potent for good. At any rate, I think the day has certainly come when an end is finally to be put to that union, not between the Church and religious association, but between the Establishment and the State, which was commenced under circumstances little auspicious, and has endured to be a source of unhappiness to Ireland and of discredit and scandal to England. There is more to say. This measure is in every sense a great measure—great in its principles, great in the multitude of its dry, technical, but interesting detail, and great as a testing measure ; for it will show for one and all of us of what metal we are made. Upon us all it brings a great responsibility—great and foremost upon those who occupy this bench. We are especially chargeable, nay, deeply guilty, if we have either dishonestly, as some think, or even prematurely or unwisely, challenged so gigantic an issue. I

know well the punishments that follow rashness in public affairs, and that ought to fall upon those men, those Phaetons of politics, who, with hands unequal to the task, attempt to guide the chariot of the sun. But the responsibility, though heavy, does not exclusively press upon us; it presses upon every man who has to take part in the discussion and decision upon this bill. Every man approaches the discussion under the most solemn obligations to raise the level of his vision and expand its scope in proportion with the greatness of the matter in hand. The working of our constitutional government itself is upon its trial, for I do not believe there ever was a time when the wheels of legislative machinery were set in motion under conditions of peace and order and constitutional regularity to deal with a question greater or more profound. And more especially, sir, are the credit and fame of this great assembly involved; this assembly, which has inherited through many ages the accumulated honors of brilliant triumphs, of peaceful but courageous legislation, is now called upon to address itself to a task which would, indeed, have demanded all the best energies of the very best among your fathers and your ancestors. I believe it will prove to be worthy of the task. Should it fail, even the fame of the House of Commons will suffer disparagement; should it succeed, even that fame, I venture to say, will receive no small, no insensible addition. I must not ask gentlemen opposite to concur in this view, emboldened as I am by the kindness they have shown me in listening with patience to a statement which could not have been other than tedious; but I pray them to bear with me for a moment while, for myself and my colleagues, I say we are sanguine of the issue. We believe, and for my part

I am deeply convinced, that, when the final consummation shall arrive, and when the words are spoken that shall give the force of law to the work embodied in this measure—the work of peace and justice—those words will be echoed upon every shore where the name of Ireland or the name of Great Britain has been heard, and the answer to them will come back in the approving verdict of civilized mankind."

Mr. Disraeli did not oppose the introduction of the bill, but demanded a period of three weeks in which to consider it. This delay Mr. Gladstone declined to concede, and it was ultimately agreed that the second reading should be proposed on the 18th of March.

"Perhaps an abler and more eloquent debate," says Mr. Molesworth, "never was carried on in the House of Commons than that on the second reading of this measure. Not to mention speakers of less importance who took part in it, there was Mr. Disraeli, who moved that the bill should be read that day six months, and who, though of course aware that he was playing a losing game, delivered one of the most forcible speeches he ever pronounced in the House of Commons.* On the same side Dr. Ball spoke with the volubility for which his countrymen are remarkable, and with an ability which threw into the shade all the able

* The London "Times" took a less favorable view of the speech, describing it as "flimsiness relieved by span-gles—the definition of a columbine's skirt."

efforts he had previously made. Mr. Miall delivered his views on the other side with the authority which his long and consistent advocacy of the change now about to be effected gave him, and who was listened to by all parties with a respectful attention seldom accorded by the House to one known as a strong partisan. Mr. Bright gave the measure the support of his high reputation and splendid eloquence. The interest he took in the question made him surpass himself, and the conclusion of his speech, in which he claimed for the bill before the House the support of the Supreme Being, as to a measure which was in accordance with His glorious attributes of truth, justice, and mercy, was delivered with a manifest earnestness and sincerity which made perhaps as profound an impression as anything that ever was uttered within the walls of Parliament. He was followed by an antagonist in every way worthy of him—Sir Roundell Palmer, whose conscientious conviction on this question had prevented him from joining a ministry whose political views were in other respects in harmony with his own opinions, and who had declined the Chancellorship and a peerage, to which the services he had rendered to the Liberal party had given him an undeniable claim, rather than consent to a measure which he disapproved. He commanded the attention to which his high character and the noble sacrifice he had made entitled him no less than the force and elo-

quence with which he urged his opinions. Admitting the existence of the discontent, he denied that the remedy proposed for it by the Government was the right one. Admitting that the existence of the Established Church in Ireland was a grievance, he argued that the grievance might be removed without a confiscation of the property of the Irish Church. He was answered with not unequal eloquence by the Solicitor-General, Sir J. Coleridge, who, however, after a brief and respectful reply to the argument of Sir R. Palmer, applied himself to the evidently more congenial task of pointing out the necessity that existed for the measure, and the advantages it was calculated to produce. The case for the bill was ingeniously and ably put by Mr. Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who met the powerful argument of Sir R. Palmer by asking the House if they would consent to disestablish the Irish Church and to leave it in possession of £16,000,000 worth of property without connection with the State, and without check even from the ecclesiastical courts. . . . But of all the speeches against the bill, decidedly the ablest and most eloquent was that which was delivered by Mr. Gathorne Hardy toward the close of the long debate, and it was received by the party which he represented with applauses far louder and more rapturous than had been bestowed on the colder and more argumentative address of their leader. He could discover no reason for

this attack on the Irish Church but jealousy like that which animated Haman. He denied that the Church was a badge of conquest ; he rather regarded it as an imperial light, as a recognition by the Executive of the superior tenderness of the Almighty, as a token of the Protestantism of the Sovereign, as a keeping alive in the dark places of Ireland the lamp of the Reformation. He maintained that the bill, instead of restoring peace and concord in Ireland, would revive agitation and increase discontent. He ran rapidly over the chief features of the disendowment scheme, in order to show that they would fail to soften the irritation of those who would feel themselves specially aggrieved by the measure. He said that the gift of churches and glebes called for no gratitude. The purchase of the tithe rent-charge was a puzzle, the treatment of Maynooth a mockery, the Church body a delusion, the proposed disposal of the surplus for the foundation of new religious endowments, and their seizure for imperial purposes, both violations of the pledges of last year. He ended by drawing a highly colored picture of the condition of Ireland, in which he represented the institutions of the country as satisfactory, freedom complete, law as justly administered as in England ; but the people, discontented without any real cause, sympathizing with crime, and influenced, not for good, by the priesthood. He concluded, amid the loud cheering of the Oppo-

sition, by insisting that an interval of peace and industry, and not a destructive measure such as that which was now brought forward—a measure wrong in the sight of God and opposed to the interests of the empire—was the real panacea for the evils under which Ireland was suffering."

It was near one o'clock on the fourth evening of the debate that Mr. Gladstone rose to close the debate. He began by remarking that Mr. Hardy had shown his fitness for a task which Burke had disclaimed—that of drawing an indictment against a whole nation. Yet, even in a picture of the Irish people so unjust as to amount to a libel, serious evils were admitted, for which Mr. Hardy had no remedy. But the Government, recognizing the existence of the Irish question, the result of years of previous misgovernment, had a remedy which they proposed of necessity piecemeal. Running over the four nights' debate, he failed to discover any rival plan that had been proposed in the place of that which he had brought forward, and the charges urged against the Government only proved that they had fairly fulfilled their pledge. In conclusion, he said :

"As the clock points rapidly toward the dawn, so are rapidly flowing out the years, the months, the days that remain to the existence of the Irish Established Church. . . . Not now are we opening this great question. Opened, perhaps, it was when the Parliament which expired last year pronounced upon it that em-

phatic judgment which can never be recalled. Opened it was, further, when in the months of autumn the discussions which were held in every quarter of the country turned mainly on the subject of the Irish Church. Prosecuted another stage it was, when the completed elections discovered to us a manifestation of the national verdict more emphatic than, with the rarest exceptions, has been witnessed during the whole of our Parliamentary history. The good cause was further advanced toward its triumphant issue when the silent acknowledgment of the late Government that they declined to contest the question was given by their retirement from office, and their choosing a less responsible position, from which to carry on a more desultory warfare against the policy which they had in the previous session unsuccessfully attempted to resist. Another blow will soon be struck in the same good cause; and I will not intercept it one single moment more."

The division was then taken, and the result was—for the second reading, 368 ; against, 250 ; majority for the Government, 118. This majority was overwhelming and decisive ; yet the progress through committee was so extremely slow that exactly three months had elapsed after the introduction of the bill before the third reading came on. The motion for a third reading was strenuously opposed, Mr. Disraeli declaring that the passage of the measure would lead to the ascendancy of the Papal power in Ireland, with a consequent reaction in England, and Mr. Gladstone making a final and eloquent defense of his scheme.

On the division the Government had a majority of 114.

In the House of Lords the bill narrowly escaped being thrown out on the second reading, Lord Derby, in the last speech he ever made, denouncing it as a scheme the political folly of which was only equaled by its moral turpitude. But the peers had so often experienced the evil results of setting themselves against the clearly pronounced wishes of the people that the more prudent concluded to accept, with as good grace as they could muster, a bill which had come up from the Commons by a majority that rendered resistance evidently hopeless ; and the second reading was carried by a small majority. "The question now arose, What would be done in committee ? Various amendments were carried of an important nature ; to some of which the Government could not agree. The bill eventually passed the Lords by 121 to 114, under a protest signed by Lord Derby and forty-three temporal and two spiritual peers. The Lords' amendments were considered by the Commons, and the chief of them were disagreed with. They were then sent back to the Lords, and an animated debate ensued in the Upper House. Lord Grey complained that the Lords were humiliated and degraded, and Lord Salisbury said their lordships were called upon to yield to the arrogant will of a single man. The Earl of Winchilsea compared Mr. Gladstone

to Jack Cade, and, after hinting at the coming of an Oliver Cromwell, declared that he was ready for the block sooner than surrender. A conference upon contested points afterward took place between Lord Granville and Lord Cairns, and a compromise was arrived at. This compromise was accepted by the Commons, and on the 26th of July the Irish Church bill received the royal assent."

Thus passed a measure which had excited more angry controversy than any that had been proposed in Parliament since the great Reform bill of 1832. "It was carried through its various stages," says a writer in the "Annual Register," for 1869, "mainly by the resolute will and unflinching energy of the Prime Minister, who, throughout the long and arduous discussions, in which he took the leading part, displayed, in full measure, those qualities of acuteness, force of reasoning, and thorough mastery of his subject for which he had long been conspicuous, but which were never more signally exhibited than on this occasion. Upon the whole, whatever may be thought of its merits or demerits, it can hardly be disputed that the act for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, introduced and carried into a law within somewhat less than five months, was the most remarkable legislative achievement of modern times."

In the course of the debate on the Irish Church

bill Mr. Gladstone had announced that that bill was only part of a general scheme, which would have to be introduced piecemeal, and, accordingly, during the next session (1870) he introduced the second of his great remedial measures—the Irish Land bill, the object of which was to remove the more crying evils connected with the tenure and cultivation of land in Ireland. On the 15th of February he brought forward the bill in a crowded House, delivering a speech which was as convincing as it was eloquent, and which ended with the following fine passage :

“If I am asked what I hope to effect by this bill, I certainly hope we shall effect a great change in Ireland; but I hope also, and confidently believe, that this change will be accomplished by gentle means. Every line of the measure has been studied with the keenest desire that it shall import as little as possible of shock or violent alteration into any single arrangement now existing between landlord and tenant in Ireland. There is, no doubt, much to be undone; there is, no doubt, much to be improved; but what we desire is that the work of this bill should be like the work of Nature herself, when on the face of a desolated land she restores what has been laid waste by the wild and savage hand of man. Its operations, we believe, will be quiet and gradual. We wish to alarm none; we wish to injure no one. What we wish is that where there has been despondency there shall be hope; where there has been mistrust there shall be confidence; where there has been alienation and hate there shall, however gradually, be woven the ties of a strong attachment

between man and man. This we know can not be done in a day. The measure has reference to evils which have been long at work ; their roots strike far back into by-gone centuries, and it is against the ordinance of Providence, as it is against the interest of man, that immediate reparation should in such cases be possible ; for one of the main restraints of misdoing would be removed, if the consequences of misdoing could in a moment receive a remedy. For such reparation and such effects it is that we look from this bill, and we reckon on them not less surely and not less confidently because we know they must be gradual and slow ; and because we are likewise aware that, if it be poisoned by the malignant agency of angry or of bitter passions, it can not do its proper work. In order that there may be a hope of its entire success, it must pass—not as a triumph of party over party, or class over class ; not as the lifting up of an ensign to record the downfall of that which has once been great and powerful—but as a common work of common love and good-will to the common good of our common country. With such objects, and in such a spirit as that, this House will address itself to the work, and sustain the feeble efforts of the Government. And my hope, at least, is high and ardent that we shall live to see our work prosper in our hand, and that in that Ireland which we desire to unite to England and Scotland by the only enduring ties—those of free-will and free affection—peace, order, and a settled and cheerful industry will diffuse their blessings from year to year, and from day to day, over a smiling land.”

There was no intention on the part of the Opposition to divide against the second reading of

the bill, but a division was forced by a few irreconcilables with this extraordinary result—For the second reading, 442 ; against, 11. Mr. Disraeli and many of his influential supporters went into the lobby with Mr. Gladstone. After many prolonged discussions, the bill was read a third time on the 30th of May, and, after passing in the Lords without a division, it received the royal assent on the 1st of August.

Another important measure which was added to the statute book during the session of 1870 was an Elementary Education Act, by means of which cheap and efficient education was brought within reach of the poorest in the land. Both these measures were passed in a session occupied with minor administrative reforms, and disturbed and interrupted by interpellations and debates on the policy of the Government with respect to the war between France and Prussia.

The session of 1871 witnessed the passage of the Army Regulation bill, embodying the abolition of Purchase, which latter Mr. Gladstone finally accomplished, in opposition to the House of Lords, by invoking the Royal Warrant. The Ballot bill was also passed in the Commons during this session, but was thrown out by the Lords. In the following year it was brought in again, and, being put in the forefront of the Government programme, was carried. In May of this year a threatened rupture between Great Britain and the United

States was averted by the conclusion of the Treaty of Washington ; and a heated debate took place over the policy pursued by the Government on the occasion of Russia repudiating those portions of the Paris Treaty of 1856 which secured the neutralization of the Black Sea.

To the years 1869, 1870, and 1871, Mr. Smith has given the designation which we have chosen as the title of the present chapter. "That period," he remarks, "which (to say nothing of minor measures) witnessed the passing of the Irish Church Act, the Endowed Schools bill, the Bankruptcy bill, the Habitual Criminals bill, the Irish Land Act, the Elementary Education Act, the Abolition of Purchase in the Army, the negotiation of the Washington treaty, the passing of the University Tests bill, and of the Trades Union bill, and the repeal of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, may well be entitled to the appellation of the golden age of Liberalism. There have been few periods in the history of this country—we might venture almost to say there have been none—when measures of equal magnitude have been passed within this limited space of time. 'The hour and the man' were both designed for the task which had to be accomplished. Never was there an age when a stronger zeal for reform was manifested—taking reform now not merely in a political and Parliamentary, but in a social, religious, and national sense ; and never was there

a statesman more fully capable of meeting the needs of such an age than Mr. Gladstone.

XIII.

REACTION AND RETIREMENT.

It is an unfortunate but a universal truth that great efforts produce reaction, and that enthusiasm subsides into lassitude ; and Mr. Gladstone had no sooner passed his great reform measures than he began to experience the effects of that reaction which follows upon unusual effort. As long as he could rely upon the united support of his party, he was irresistible ; but it was only on the Irish question that Mr. Bouverie's "rabble" had become a disciplined army, and the Golden Age of Liberalism had hardly begun when symptoms of discontent began to manifest themselves among different sections of Mr. Gladstone's followers.

An influential section of the Nonconformists had resented a clause in the Education Act which extended aid to denominationalists. The extinction of abuses by the Endowed School Commission led to piteous outcries. The clergy trembled for the Bible and for their schools. Mr. Gladstone's foreign policy was assailed with much clamor. There were patriots who would rather

have fought over the Alabama Claims than have paid them ; and the Government was accused of playing a "feeble" part in the Franco-German War. Opponents of the Abolition of Purchase declared the Constitution had been strained by the issue of the Royal Warrant. Mr. Bruce alienated the whole of the brewing interest by his licensing bill, and the Government were absurdly held responsible for a series of disasters reflecting upon the Admiralty. Indignation was aroused when Sir Robert Collier was gazetted as a Puisne Judge of the Common Pleas, for the purpose of qualifying him for an appointment to the Judicial Committee ; and another "scandal" was produced when the Rev. W. W. Harvey was made a member of the Oxford Convocation in order that he might succeed to the vacant rectory of Ewelme. Finally, several members of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet had succeeded in rendering themselves personally unpopular.

But the reaction was mainly due, as we have said, to more general causes. Mr. Gladstone had lived fast and traveled far. He had crowded as much work into three sessions as would formerly have been estimated as the full allowance of three Parliaments. He had done all and more than all that he had promised—far more than might reasonably have been anticipated on his entering office. In fact, his pace had been far too rapid for his easy-going Whig supporters, and, when they found

that the passage of the Irish bills had not secured them a respite, they began to murmur against so-called "heroic" legislation.

The first marked symptom of his waning popularity was shown in 1871, when a section of his own constituents drew up a petition inviting him to resign his seat for Greenwich. This movement was promptly repudiated by the majority of his constituents, and Mr. Gladstone won back most of his personal popularity by a great open-air speech delivered on Blackheath to an audience of 20,000 persons; but the discontent in Parliament was more dangerous and less easily dealt with. In the session of 1872 the growing apathy of his supporters was shown at the bringing in of the Ballot bill—a measure of the first importance, but for the division on the second reading of which the strenuous exertion of the party whips could muster an aggregate voting power of only 165. The third reading was carried by 276 votes against 218; figures which show that Mr. Gladstone still had a substantial majority in the House. But the crisis was reached when the Irish University bill brought about a new birth of the Cave of Adullam, and was defeated by a coalition between the extreme Liberals and the ever-watchful Conservatives.

Mr. Gladstone regarded this bill as calculated to efface the last of the religious and social grievances of Ireland, and as putting a finishing

stroke to the work to which his Government had pledged itself on coming into office. He introduced it at an early period of the session of 1873 in "a remarkably able and argumentative speech ; which quite carried away the House ; and it was thought at first that the bill would command almost unanimous support. But, when the measure came to be deliberately scanned, objections were raised against it which had not at first presented themselves, and it soon came to be seen that the bill would encounter the strong opposition of the Irish Roman Catholic hierarchy, while many Irish Protestants were also induced to oppose it through an utterly unfounded fear that the Catholic claims would be conceded." In fact, as one of its critics said, the bill "offended everybody and pleased nobody," and, after a prolonged and animated debate, it was rejected by a majority of three in a House of 571 members.

As Mr. Gladstone had distinctly declared in the course of the debate that the Government would stand or fall by their measure, he and his colleagues at once resigned their offices, and Mr. Disraeli was sent for by the Queen to form a new administration. Knowing that he would be in a hopeless minority in the House, Mr. Disraeli declined the task, and Mr. Gladstone reluctantly returned to office and resumed the business of the session.

Naturally, the defeat of the Government did

not improve either the temper or the prospects of the Liberal party, while it threw fresh vigor into the ranks of their opponents. "The session," says Mr. Lucy, "flickered to an end amid constant wrangles and an aggravating disregard for authority. In vain Mr. Ayrton had been cast overboard, and in vain Mr. Lowe repeated in his own person the *rôle* of Jonah. The Ministerial ship would not right, but lay in the trough of the sea, an object of derision from the fickle public who, five years earlier, had helped to launch it amid demonstrations of the wildest enthusiasm. Buffeted abroad, assailed from within, angry, dispirited with existing circumstances, and hopeful of the verdict of a nation whose behests he had splendidly fulfilled, Mr. Gladstone suddenly cut the Gordian knot. On the 24th of January, 1874, just on the eve of the assembling of Parliament for the customary session, the country awoke to find that Parliament was dissolved. It was through the medium of an address to the electors of Greenwich that the startling news was communicated. There was considerable vigor in the lengthy document, and Mr. Gladstone, who a few months earlier, upon the resignation of Mr. Lowe, had returned to his old office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, promised a renewed exhibition of the magic with which the country was once familiar, and which should now be directed to the extinction of the income tax. But between the

lines it was not difficult to read that the great statesman was weary and sick at heart. 'If,' he said, 'the trust of this Administration be by the effect of the present elections virtually renewed, I for one will serve you, for what remains of my time, gratefully; if the confidence of the country be taken from us, and handed over to others whom you may deem more worthy, I for one will accept cheerfully my dismissal.' There was no presage of victory in such a call to battle. But in his gloomiest moments Mr. Gladstone could not have anticipated the full depth of the reverse of fortune which awaited him at the poll. He himself narrowly escaped defeat at Greenwich—coming in second—the head of the poll being reserved for an estimable but obscure Conservative. Elsewhere, all along the line, the Liberals were defeated. The solid phalanx that had carried the Irish Church bill, the Irish Land bill, the Education bill, and the Ballot bill was hopelessly shattered. When the gains and losses were counted up, it was found that Mr. Disraeli, meeting Parliament in 1874, was almost exactly in the same position as Mr. Gladstone had been when meeting Parliament in 1869. The pendulum, having swung violently to one side, had in return reached nearly the same altitude on the other."

Discussing this result recently, in an article in the "Fortnightly Review," Mr. Henry Dunckley says: "Mr. Gladstone's share in producing

this catastrophe has not escaped censure. Undoubtedly but for him it need not have happened when it did, and might not have happened at all. The Parliament of 1868 had still two sessions to live, and on every question but one the Government might count upon being supported by decisive majorities. In the course of two years the Conservative reaction might have itself reacted, while the Liberals would have had leisure to array their forces instead of being taken unawares. In any case, if defeat had come at last, it would have come in a less dramatic form, with less of pomp and circumstance for the victors. Perhaps the resolution to dissolve was rash, but it was, at all events, a noble indiscretion. Mr. Gladstone was assailed on all sides with the cry that he had not the confidence of the nation, and there were some grounds for believing that it was true. Within the last three years the Liberals again and again have sought to bring it home to Lord Beaconsfield's conscience that he ought to sacrifice his enormous majority in Parliament and submit himself to the country. It is true that in his case a policy had been entered upon which was not dreamed of when the present Parliament was elected, but the principle implied in the appeal to Lord Beaconsfield covers every case in which a Premier has reason to doubt whether he still retains the confidence of the country. Mr. Gladstone scorned to tolerate a doubt on this point.

He would rule with the assent and applause of the nation, or not at all ; and our opinion of his conduct depends upon whether party considerations are to be preferred to a nice sense of ministerial honor."

As soon as the national verdict was known, Mr. Gladstone sought the Queen at Windsor, and surrendered an office which for a year or more past had offered him little to compensate for its burdens. But even such leisure and retirement as release from the cares of office secured to him did not seem sufficient for his purposes at this juncture ; and, by a step which has been the most openly censured and the least successfully excused of any he has ever taken, Mr. Gladstone, just before the opening of the new Parliament, left the Liberal party practically without a leader.

In one of the speeches delivered before his constituents during the campaign, he had intimated that, if the country decided upon the dismissal of the Liberal Ministry, he should reserve to himself the right of limiting his future services to his party as he might think fit ; but the precise significance of this was not fully understood until, on March 12th, he wrote the following letter to Lord Granville :

"MY DEAR GRANVILLE: I have issued a circular to members of Parliament of the Liberal party on the occasion of the opening of Parliamentary business. But I feel it to be necessary that, while discharging this duty,

I should explain what a circular could not convey with regard to my individual position at the present time. I need not apologize for addressing these explanations to you. Independently of other reasons for so troubling you, it is enough to observe that you have very long represented the Liberal party, and have also acted on behalf of the late Government, from its commencement to its close, in the House of Lords.

“For a variety of reasons personal to myself, I could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service; and I am anxious that it should be clearly understood by those friends with whom I have acted in the direction of affairs, that at my age I must reserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time. The need of rest will prevent me from giving more than occasional attendance in the House of Commons during the present session.

“I should be desirous, shortly before the commencement of the session of 1875, to consider whether there would be advantage in my placing my services for a time at the disposal of the Liberal party, or whether I should then claim exemption from the duties I have hitherto discharged. If, however, there should be reasonable ground for believing that, instead of the course which I have sketched, it would be preferable, in the view of the party generally, for me to assume at once the place of an independent member, I should willingly adopt the latter alternative. But I shall retain all that desire I have hitherto felt for the welfare of the party, and, if the gentlemen composing it should think fit either to choose a leader or make provision *ad interim*, with a view to the convenience of the present year, the person desig-

nated would, of course, command from me any assistance which he might find occasion to seek, and which it might be in my power to render."

As a matter of course, the Liberal party had no alternative but to accept Mr. Gladstone's offer, and avail themselves of his services as long as possible ; and, accordingly, during the session of 1874, he conscientiously performed the duties of leader of the Opposition. It was observed, however, that, though he made important speeches on the bill for the Regulation of Public Worship and on educational topics, he seldom entered upon Parliamentary questions with anything like his old spirit and vigor ; and few, perhaps, were surprised when, in January, 1875, he addressed a second letter to Lord Granville, announcing his resignation in decisive and unmistakable terms :

"The time has, I think, arrived," he said, "when I ought to revert to the subject of the letter which I addressed to you on March 12th. Before determining whether I should offer to assume a charge which might extend over a length of time, I have reviewed, with all the care in my power, a number of considerations, both public and private, of which a portion, and these not by any means insignificant, were not in existence at the date of that letter. The result has been that I see no public advantage in my continuing to act as the leader of the Liberal party ; and that, at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity. This retire-

ment is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life. I need hardly say that my conduct in Parliament will continue to be governed by the principles on which I have heretofore acted; and, whatever arrangements may be made for the treatment of general business, and for the advantage or convenience of the Liberal party, they will have my cordial support. I should, perhaps, add that I am at present, and mean for a short time to be, engaged on a special matter, which occupies me closely."

"Such a resignation on the part of a great political chief," says Mr. Smith, "was without precedent; but, while many lamented the step, none challenged the right of this eminent statesman to retire after forty-two years of active service. Even with a less brilliant catalogue of legislative achievements than his, it was surely within his own legitimate province to say when the time had come for putting off the political armor, and yielding the command of the Liberal forces into other hands. At the same time, the announcement came with so great a surprise upon the country that for the moment it could scarcely be realized. That he who for a considerable period had been the life and soul of one of the two great political parties in the state should thus suddenly relinquish its control, carried something like consternation into the ranks of those who were anxiously looking for the consolidation of the Liberal party. Efforts were made to induce Mr. Gladstone to re-

consider his decision, but in vain ; and, in formally acknowledging the receipt of the ex-Premier's letter, Earl Granville wrote as follows : 'I have communicated to you in detail the reasons which made me profoundly regret and deprecate the conclusion at which you have arrived. Your late colleagues share these feelings to the fullest extent, and have regretted the failure of their endeavor to persuade you to come to a different decision. We have no doubt that the Liberal party, both in and out of Parliament, will feel as we do on the subject. The observations we have addressed to you are prompted by considerations of public advantage for the future, and not merely by our sense of your great services, and our sentiments of personal admiration and attachment.'

"The daily and weekly press, both metropolitan and provincial, were all but unanimous in their expressions of sympathy and regret, and in recognizing in Mr. Gladstone's retirement a loss to the nation. Many journals expressed a hope that the resignation was the result of a temporary depression, rather than of a lasting mood of mind ; and, while assuming that there would be many occasions when his mind would revert to Westminster, they trusted also that a sense of duty to the nation would bring him back at recurrent intervals to the scene of so many triumphs."

His former colleagues and party associates vied with each other in the cordiality of their tributes

to the retiring leader. Mr. Bright, addressing his constituents at Birmingham, said—in allusion to the few disparaging comments that had been made—“I will say nothing in answer to the ungenerous things that have been said and done. Of this I am well aware—that Mr. Gladstone, like an old and a noble Roman, can be content with deserving the praises of his country, even though some of his countrymen should deny them to him.” And Mr. Forster, in a speech delivered at the Bradford Chamber of Commerce, remarked that, although every one knew Mr. Gladstone’s power and eloquence, it was only those who had been brought into close personal contact with him who knew what an example he had set in the absolute sincerity, the absolute want of selfishness or self-seeking, in the principles and the manner in which he had conducted political life. “It is difficult,” he said, “for any one who has not been brought into close contact with him, and seen him under occasions of difficulty such as those in which a colleague has seen him—occasions, I must say, not only of difficulty, but even of temptation—it is difficult for any one who has not been in that position thoroughly to realize what an example of purity, of self-sacrifice, and of disinterestedness he has set to politicians throughout the country, and to what an extent he, as far as he has acted, has raised the tone of political life.”

Speaking of the practical outcome of the resig-

nation, Mr. Lucy says : " This was an arrangement not altogether hopeless, if Mr. Gladstone had carried out in the letter and in the spirit the intention of withdrawing from active participation in politics, announced in his epistle to Earl Granville. But his temperament was not suited for the exhibition of silent yet not sullen endurance which he had extolled in the monuments of ancient Sicily. Even in the first session of the new Parliament he succeeded in introducing a disturbing feature in political warfare. No one knew exactly at what hour, or in respect of what political bill, he might not suddenly appear—as he did in respect of the Public Worship bill—and upset all calculation and all arrangement. This habit grew in intensity in the following session, and Mr. Gladstone came to be more terrible to his political friends than to the party opposite. It was all very well for the Liberals to meet in the smoke-room of the Reform Club, and elect Lord Hartington leader, *vice* Mr. Gladstone retired from politics. It would have been just as efficacious for the solar system to meet and elect the moon to rule by day, *vice* the sun resigned. Mr. Gladstone's erratic appearances in the political firmament were sufficient temporarily to dispose of the titular Leader of the Liberals, and to set the whole system once more revolving round himself."

No sooner was he definitively released from the cares and responsibilities of political leadership

than Mr. Gladstone turned with zest to those literary activities which had only been in abeyance ; and, as on a previous occasion, theology furnished him with a theme. Reverting, during the recess of 1874, to an ecclesiastical controversy which had been initiated some months before in the House of Commons (in a debate on the Public Worship bill), he published an article in the "Contemporary Review," entitled "What is Ritualism?" in which he gave this general definition of Ritualism : "It is unwise, undisciplined reaction from poverty, from coldness, from barrenness, from nakedness ; it is overlaying purpose with adventitious and obstructive incumbrance ; it is departure from measure and from harmony in the annexation of appearance to substance, of the outward to the inward ; it is the caricature of the beautiful ; it is the conversion of help into hindrances ; it is the attempted substitution of the secondary for the primary aim, and the real failure and paralysis of both."

This essay provoked many criticisms, to which, in the following year, Mr. Gladstone published a general reply, entitled "Is the Church of England Worth Preserving?"—a question which he answered in the affirmative. But the most important outcome of the essay was an indirect one. In his first article was a passage which roused the indignation of the Roman Catholics to the highest pitch ; and, in order to justify the assertions

which it contained, Mr. Gladstone wrote a pamphlet on "The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance: A Political Expostulation." The propositions which occasioned the pamphlet, and which he now defended, were as follows: "I. That Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change in faith. II. That she has refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused. III. That no one can now become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another. IV. That Rome has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history."

The pamphlet was a very able one, and it created an excitement and attained a success such as few pamphlets, or indeed works of any kind, have ever attained. Mr. Smith tells us that in the course of a few weeks no fewer than 120,000 copies of it were sold; and replies innumerable (including one from Dr. Newman) appeared, some endorsing its views and some endeavoring to confute them. Three months after the appearance of his first pamphlet, Mr. Gladstone issued a second, entitled "Vaticanism: An Answer to Reproofs and Replies." In it he reiterated and fortified his original charges, and urged that "the Vatican Decrees do, in the strictest sense, establish for the Pope a supreme command over

loyalty and civil duty." In addition to these dissertations on the subject of Vaticanism, Mr. Gladstone contributed a vigorous and searching criticism upon the "Speeches of Pope Pius IX" to the "Quarterly Review" for January, 1875.

Religious controversy is, in general, perhaps, the most barren field in which an able man can exercise his intellect; but Mr. Gladstone's Vatican pamphlets really did good service in making known the nature and possible political bearings of the Papal pretensions. Another good result which they accomplished was in demonstrating (by means of the controversy that arose over them) that there is a want of harmony among the members of the Romish Church themselves on the subject of the Vatican Decrees. Even Cardinal Newman—whom Mr. Gladstone describes as "the first living theologian now within the Roman Catholic Communion"—interprets them in a way which can hardly be more satisfactory to the Ultramontanes than their deliberate rejection would be.

XIV.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

TWICE during Mr. Gladstone's career as a statesman, the Eastern Question—that “skeleton in the closet of Europe,” as it has been truly called—has come to the front, and seemed to call for immediate solution. The first time that it came up, Mr. Gladstone was a member of the Government, and was found defending “British interests” by aiding the Turks against Russian aggression. The second time that it came up, he assailed Mr. Disraeli's Ministry with unexampled fierceness and persistency, because they seemed disposed to take the same view of “British interests” that had instigated and justified the Crimean War. For this apparent inconsistency, he has himself been bitterly and relentlessly criticised; and his course in the later emergency has been ascribed to mere personal animosity toward Lord Beaconsfield. His own explanation is, that the two cases, instead of being identical, as is commonly assumed, were, in fact, completely contrasted with each other—Turkey being at the later period the “violateur of the public law of Europe,” as Russia had been at the earlier period.*

*For a more detailed account of Mr. Gladstone's defense, see the closing pages of the chapter on the Crimean War.

In making this explanation, Mr. Gladstone is no doubt perfectly sincere, and his facts and arguments in support of it are not without cogency ; but the real truth probably is that, whereas at the time of the Crimean War the English Government and people were completely deceived as to the real nature and meaning of Turkish rule, the eyes of most of them had been opened before the next occasion for championing and supporting it had come round. Nor is it any discredit to a statesman that his opinions and policy should be changed by such revelations as the 'Turks made of themselves during 1875 and 1876. After all, a statesman is not exempt from the common obligations and sentiments of humanity ; and to prefer the emancipation of an oppressed and suffering people to a selfish conception of one's own national interests is, to say the least, a generous and a noble trait.

After the Crimean War the Eastern Question remained in a state of quiescence for twenty years, but it again became urgent when, in July, 1875, an insurrection broke out in Herzegovina, where the oppression of the Christian peasantry by Mohammedan landlords, though long endured, had at length become intolerable. In January, 1876, the insurgents gained a victory over the Turks ; and a few days later Count Andrassy, the Austrian Premier, drew up a Note containing a scheme of reforms in behalf of the Christian pop-

ulations of Turkey, which, being communicated to the Porte by the Austrian, Russian, and German ambassadors, was accepted by the Sultan's Government. This seemed to promise a peaceful solution of the difficulties ; but, early in May, another insurrection broke out in Bulgaria, and the Turks concluded that the time had come for applying their characteristic methods of dealing with such troubles. What these methods were was shown a few days later when the fearful tragedy of Batak sent a thrill of horror throughout Europe. Mr. Baring, the English consul, has furnished us a vivid and authoritative account of this tragedy. On learning of the approach of the Turks, a large number of the people of Batak, probably about 1,000 or 1,200, took refuge in the church and churchyard. The church was a solid building, and resisted all attempts by the Bashi-Bazouks to burn it from the outside. They consequently fired into the windows, and, getting upon the roof, tore off the tiles, and threw pieces of burning wood and rags dipped in petroleum among the mass of unhappy human beings inside. At last the door was forced in, the slaughter completed, and the inside of the church burned. Hardly any one—man, woman, or child—escaped out of the fatal walls ; and for weeks afterward the scene beggared description. The massacre at Batak was the most heinous crime that has stained the annals of the present century ; yet, for

his services in perpetrating it, the Turkish leader, Achmet Agha, received from the Sultan the much-coveted Order of the Medjidie. Nor was this all. Mr. Baring, after careful investigation, estimated that no fewer than 12,000 persons had perished in the sandjak of Philippopolis. At least, sixty villages had been destroyed; and a district once the most fertile in the empire had been reduced to a desert. At one place, forty young girls were shut up in a straw loft and burned; and outrages of the most revolting description were committed upon hundreds of unfortunate captives.

Before the news of these atrocities reached England, renewed efforts had been made to effect a peaceable adjustment. On the 11th of May, the Emperor of Russia, accompanied by Prince Gortschakoff, arrived at Berlin, to confer with the Emperor William, Prince Bismarck, and Count Andrassy, on the state of affairs; and the outcome of this conference was the famous Berlin Memorandum, containing a programme of reforms which were to be urged upon Turkey by the united voice of Europe. England alone refused to sign this Memorandum, and shortly afterward the British fleet in the Mediterranean was ordered to Besika Bay—the effect of which was to break the European concert and encourage the Turks in their attitude of resistance.

This occurred during the latter part of May,

and early in June the revelations respecting the massacres in Bulgaria reached England, arousing a passionate indignation in the minds of every one, apparently, except Mr. Disraeli and his colleagues. Mr. Disraeli expressed the belief that the outrages were exaggerated, and jocularly declared that, as to the torture of impalement (which had caused universal disgust and anger), he had only to remark that an Oriental people generally terminated their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner! It was in a debate on the policy of the Government that Mr. Disraeli made his last speech in the House of Commons (August 11, 1876). On the morning after this speech, it was announced that he had been elevated to the peerage under the title of Earl of Beaconsfield.

In the mean time events were hastening onward in Southeastern Europe. In June the Servians and Montenegrins had agreed to interfere in behalf of the insurrectionary Herzegovinians, and the former were engaged in a hopeless struggle against the concentrated might of the Turkish Empire. Russia was in the midst of a storm of popular excitement which was sure to lead to war, unless an end were put to the outrages upon the Christian subjects of the Porte; and Mr. Gladstone, deeming it high time that the voice of England also should be heard upon these infamous deeds, published a pamphlet, entitled

“Bulgarian Horrors, and the Question of the East.” In it he urged that England should aim at the accomplishment of three great objects, in addition to the termination of the war, viz., 1. To put a stop to the anarchical misrule, the plundering, the murdering, which still desolated Bulgaria. 2. To make effectual provision against the recurrence of the outrages recently perpetrated under the sanction of the Ottoman Government by excluding its administrative action for the future, not only from Bosnia and the Herzegovina, but also, and above all, from Bulgaria. 3. To redeem by such measures the honor of the British name, which in the deplorable events of the year had been more gravely compromised than he had known it to be at any former period. “Let us insist,” he said, “that our Government, which has been working in one direction, shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigor to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zapatiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned. . . . If it be allowable that the executive power of Turkey should renew at this great

crisis, by permission or authority of Europe, the charter of its existence in Bulgaria, then there is not on record, since the beginnings of political society, a protest that man has lodged against intolerable misgovernment, or a stroke he has dealt at loathsome tyranny, that ought not henceforward to be branded as a crime."

The pamphlet was published in September, and a few days afterward Mr. Gladstone followed it up by a great speech to his constituents on Blackheath. He was received with immense enthusiasm, and at various points in his address the audience were literally carried away by the strength of their emotions. Referring to the massacre at Glencoe, the atrocities of Badajoz, the revolt of Cephalonia, and the more recent revolt in Jamaica, he said: "To compare these proceedings to what we are now dealing with is an insult to the common sense of Europe. They may constitute a dark page in British history, but, if you could concentrate the whole of that page, or every one of them, into a single point and a single spot, it would not be worthy to appear upon one of the pages that will hereafter consign to everlasting infamy the proceedings of the Turks in Bulgaria." With regard to the policy to be pursued, and the terms to be offered to the Turk, he would say to the latter: "You shall receive a reasonable tribute; you shall retain your titular sovereignty; your empire shall not be invaded;

but never again while the years roll their course, so far as it is in our power to determine, never again shall the hand of violence be raised by you, never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by you for the sake of making mankind miserable in Bulgaria." Passing on to the question how this effectual prevention was to be secured, Mr. Gladstone said it could only be done with safety by the united action of the powers of Europe. The mind and the heart of Europe must be one in this matter. The assent of Russia, Germany, Austria, France, England, and Italy was not only important, but indispensable, to entire success and satisfaction. Yet there were two powers whose position was such that they stood forth far before the rest in authority, in the means of effectually applying that authority, and in responsibility upon this great question, viz., England and Russia. Enlarging still further upon this point, Mr. Gladstone observed :

"I am far from supposing—I am not such a dreamer as to suppose—that Russia, more than any other country, is exempt from selfishness and ambition. But she has also within her, like other countries, the pulse of humanity, and, for my own part, I believe it is the pulse of humanity which is now throbbing almost ungovernably in her people. Upon the concord and hearty coöperation—not upon a mere hollow truce between England and Russia, but upon their concord and hearty cordial coöperation—depend a good settlement of this question.

Their power is immense. The power of Russia by land for acting upon these countries as against Turkey is perfectly resistless; the power of England by sea is scarcely less important at this moment. For, I ask you, what would be the condition of the Turkish armies if the British Admiral now in Besika Bay were to inform the Government of Constantinople that from that hour, until atonement had been made—until punishment had descended, until justice had been vindicated—not a man, nor a ship, nor a boat should cross the waters of the Bosphorus, or the cloudy Euxine, or the bright Ægean, to carry aid to the Turkish troops?"

This address drew forth a reply from Lord Beaconsfield, in the course of which he described the conduct of his opponents as worse than any Bulgarian atrocity; and the agitation thus begun put a peremptory end to Mr. Gladstone's contemplated retirement from politics. Though no longer the titular leader of the Opposition, the Government found in him a sleepless critic of every development of its Eastern policy, and both in and out of Parliament he threw himself into the conflict with passionate ardor and enthusiasm. No speeches that he ever made are so surcharged with feeling and intense fervor of conviction as the long series that he delivered against the foreign policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration.

That policy had gradually revealed itself as one of opposition to Russia and "moral support" of Turkey. On the 23d of December, 1876, a

conference met at Constantinople (with Lord Salisbury representing England), and drew up a scheme of reform and guarantees, which was, in January, 1877, presented to the Porte as indicating the views of Europe upon the demands of the situation. The scheme was a moderate one ; but the Ottoman Government, encouraged by the attitude of England, rejected it as “contrary to the integrity, independence, and dignity of the empire.”

Before the abortive result of the conference was known, a great public meeting, to discuss the Eastern Question, was held at St. James’s Hall, London ; and Mr. Gladstone delivered an address, in the course of which he expressed the hope that the plenipotentiaries would insist on the future independence of the provinces, or, at least, upon such administrative autonomy as would insure them against arbitrary injustice and oppression. He declared this to be not only a worthy aim, but an absolute duty. “It is a case of positive obligation, and, under the stringent pressure of that obligation, I say that, if at length long-suffering and long-oppressed humanity in these provinces is lifting itself from the ground, and beginning again to contemplate the heavens, it is our business to assist the work. It is our business to acknowledge the obligation, to take part in the burden, and it is our privilege to claim for our country a share in the honor and in the fame. This ac-

knowledge of duty, this attempt to realize the honor, is what we at least shall endeavor to obtain from the Government ; and with nothing less than this shall we who are assembled here be, under any circumstances, persuaded to say 'Content.'” In a speech delivered at this same meeting, Mr. Edward A. Freeman, the historian, said, referring to the doctrine of British interests, “Perish the interests of England, perish our dominion in India, sooner than we should strike one blow or speak one word on behalf of wrong against right.” And Mr. Carlyle, unable to attend, wrote a letter, in which he said : “The only clear advice I have to give is that the unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question, and the country left to honest European guidance, delaying which can be profitable or agreeable only to gamblers on the Stock Exchange, but distressing and unprofitable to all other men.”

On hearing of the “woeful failure” of the Constantinople Conference, Mr. Gladstone threw the responsibility for the situation upon the Government, and continued to address great public meetings in opposition to Lord Beaconsfield’s policy. For this course he was assailed, when Parliament met for the session of 1877, as “an inflammatory agitator,” and in defending himself said : “Such is the depth and strength of the sentiment which has taken possession of the mind and heart of England in reference to this question

that I, in my poor and feeble person, have felt it almost impossible to avoid the manifestation of this almost unexampled national and popular feeling." He concluded a wonderfully powerful and impressive speech with the following eloquent words :

" We have, I think, the most solemn and the greatest question to determine that has come before Parliament in my time. It is only under very rare circumstances that such a question—the question of the East—can be fully raised, fully developed and exhibited, and fully brought home to the minds of men with that force, with that command, with that absorbing power, which it ought to exercise over them. In the original entrance of the Turks into Europe, it may be said to have been a turning-point in human history. To a great extent it continues to be the cardinal question, the question which casts into the shade every other question, and the question which is now brought before the mind of the country far more fully than at any period of our history, far more fully than even at the time of the Crimean War, when we were pouring forth our blood and treasure in what we thought to be the cause of justice and right. And I endeavored to impress upon the minds of my audience at Taunton, not a blind prejudice against this man or that, but a great watchfulness, and the duty of great activity. It is the duty of every man to feel that he is bound for himself, according to his opportunities, to examine what belongs to this question, with regard to which it can never be forgotten that we are those who set up the power of Turkey in 1854; that we are those who gave her the strength which has been exhibited in the Bulgarian mas-

sacres; that we are those who made the treaty arrangements that have secured her for twenty years from almost a single hour of uneasiness brought about by foreign intervention; and that, therefore, nothing can be greater and nothing deeper than our responsibility in the matter. It is incumbent upon us, one and all, that we do not allow any consideration, either of party or personal convenience, to prevent us from endeavoring to the best of our ability to discharge this great duty, that now, at length, in the East, has sprung up; and that in the midst of this great opportunity, when all Europe has been called to collective action, and when something like European concert has been established—when we learn the deep human interests that are involved in every stage of the question—as far as England at least is concerned, every Englishman should strive to the utmost of his might that justice shall be done.”

On the 24th of April, 1877, all efforts at adjustment having failed, Russia declared war against Turkey; and on the 1st of May England, France, and Italy issued proclamations enjoining strict neutrality in the impending conflict. On the 7th of May Mr. Gladstone submitted to the House a series of resolutions, urging that “the influence of the British Crown may be addressed to the promoting the concert of the European Powers in exacting from the Ottoman Porte, by their united authority, such changes in the government of Turkey as they may deem to be necessary for the purposes of humanity and justice, for effectual defense against intrigue, and for the peace of the

world.” In his speech supporting the resolutions he gave a comprehensive survey of the whole question of the East, and toward the end asked whether, with regard to the great battle of freedom against oppression then going on, the people of England could lay their hands upon their hearts, and in the face of God and man say, “We have well and sufficiently performed our part?” Then came this noble peroration :

“Sir, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favorite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition, older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honor and justice. And, sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to dress up the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy in the garb of British interests, and then, with a new and base idolatry, fall down and worship them? Or are we to look, not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago—viz., that it is the populations of those countries that will ultimately possess

them—that will ultimately determine their abiding condition? It is to this fact, this law, that we should look. There is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those unhappy people are still as yet making an effort to retrieve what they have lost so long, but have not ceased to love and to desire. I speak of those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion—a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen—stand on the rocks of Montenegro, and are ready now, as they have ever been during the four hundred years of their exile from their fertile plains, to sweep down from their fastnesses, and meet the Turks at any odds for the reëstablishment of justice and of peace in those countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upward, even to their Father in Heaven, have extended their hands to you; they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that they do not seek alliance with Russia or with any foreign Power, but that they seek to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame—the greatest that exists on God's earth—is one that we thought united Europe was about to remove, but to removing which, for the present, you seem to have no efficacious means of offering even the smallest practical contribution. But, sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the Cabinet who would try to win it if they were free to act on their own beliefs and aspirations. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize, but be assured that, whether you mean to claim for your-

selves even a single leaf in that immortal chaplet of renown, which will be the reward of true labor in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and upon your own duty, I believe for one that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these provinces has sounded. So far as human eye can judge, it is about to be destroyed. The destruction may not come in the way or by the means that we should choose; but, come this boon from what hands it may, it will be a noble boon, and as a noble boon will gladly be accepted by Christendom and the world."

In closing the debate, which lasted five days, Mr. Gladstone again said :

" We are engaged in a continuous effort ; we roll the stone of Sisyphus against the slope, and the moment the hand shall be withdrawn, down it will begin to run. However, the time is short ; the sands of the hour-glass are running out. The longer you delay, the less in all likelihood you will be able to save from the wreck of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. If Russia should fail, her failure would be a disaster to mankind, and the condition of the suffering races, for whom we are supposed to have labored, will be worse than it was before. If she succeeds, and if her conduct be honorable, nay, even if it be but tolerably prudent, the performance of the work she has in hand will, notwithstanding all your jealousies and all your reproaches, secure for her an undying fame. When that work shall be accomplished, though it be not in the way and by the means I would have chosen, as an Englishman I shall hide my head, but as a man I shall rejoice. Nevertheless, to my latest day

I will exclaim, Would God that in this crisis the voice of the nation had been suffered to prevail! Would God that in this great, this holy deed, England had not been refused her share!"

But neither argument nor eloquence could make any impression upon the compact phalanx of Lord Beaconsfield's supporters. The resolutions were rejected by a vote of 354 to 223. And all through the long contest the Government secured for its policy the support of similar Parliamentary majorities.

Meanwhile, the Russo-Turkish War had begun, and was carried forward to the result which is well known to all. By the end of 1877—in spite of the bravery of Osman Pasha and the incompetence of the Russian generals—Turkey was prostrate before her conqueror, and on January 23, 1878, the Treaty of San Stefano was signed.

A week afterward, on the 30th of January, Mr. Gladstone delivered a speech at Oxford, in which he strongly condemned the sending of the British fleet to the Dardanelles. He was afraid it would be found that it was a breach of European law. He had been accused of being an agitator, and with regard to the last eighteen months that might be said to be true. His purpose had been, to the best of his power, day and night, week by week, month by month, to counterwork what he believed to be the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield. It was in replying to this and other speeches of his

rival that Lord Beaconsfield gave the celebrated description of Mr. Gladstone as "a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and to glorify himself."

The Treaty of San Stefano, far from restoring the European concert, seemed likely for a time to kindle the flames of a general war. England regarded it as oppressive, and demanded that it should be submitted for revision to a general congress of the Great Powers to assemble at Berlin; and in this demand she was supported by Austria. Russia at first refused to submit the entire treaty, but, under a secret agreement with Lord Salisbury that its substantial results should not be disturbed, at length conceded the point. The Congress met on the 30th of June, the English plenipotentiaries being the Earl of Beaconsfield and the Marquis of Salisbury. One month later the Treaty of Berlin was signed; and Lord Beaconsfield returned to England, bringing the phrase "peace with honor" and a secret Anglo-Turkish convention by which England obtained Cyprus as a military station and bound herself to defend the Turkish possessions in Asia from all further aggression.

Shortly before the close of the session a great debate arose in the House of Commons, extending

over the whole range of Eastern affairs and the recent treaties. In the course of his speech on the occasion, Mr. Gladstone said that, taking the whole of the provisions of the Berlin treaty together, he thankfully and joyfully acknowledged that great results had been achieved in the diminution of human misery, and toward the establishment of human happiness and prosperity in the East. Yet he could not shut his eyes to the fact that the Slavs, looking to Russia, had been freed ; while the Greeks, looking to England, remained with all their aspirations unsatisfied. Discussing the conduct of the British plenipotentiaries at the Congress, he found that, as a general rule, they took the side opposed to that of freedom :

“I say, sir, that in this Congress of the Great Powers the voice of England has not been heard in unison with the institutions, the history, and the character of England. On every question that arose and that became a subject of serious contest in the Congress, or that could lead to any important practical result, a voice had been heard from Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury which sounded in the tones of Metternich, and not in the tones of Mr. Canning, or of Lord Palmerston, or of Lord Russell. I do not mean that the British Government ought to have gone to the Congress determined to insist upon the unqualified prevalence of what I may call British ideas. They were bound to act in consonance with the general views of Europe. But, within the limits of fair difference of opinion, which will always be found to

arise on such occasions, I do affirm that it was their part to take the side of liberty; and I do also affirm that as a matter of fact they took the side of servitude."

He also vigorously assailed the Anglo-Turkish Convention; but his strongest attack upon that compact was in an address delivered to a meeting of Liberals in the Drill Hall, Bermondsey:

"There is but one epithet which, I think, fully describes a covenant of this kind. I think it is an insane covenant. I have known well the most eminent statesmen of the last forty years. I have known them on both sides of politics. I was in my early life a follower of Sir Robert Peel and of the Duke of Wellington, and of Lord Aberdeen; and, although I regret some things that I did, and have altered some opinions that I then held, yet, in point of honor and public duty, I am not in the least ashamed of any act of my public life. I do not think that the country ever had more honorable public servants; and, moreover, I will venture to say, particularly of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, that I have known under the name of Liberals men much less Liberal than they. But, gentlemen, what I wish to say is this, that, having known them on the other side—and having known well and worked with such men as Lord Russell, Lord Palmerston, Lord Lansdowne, and many more now called to their account—I do not believe that there is one of those—I am perfectly confident that there never was one of those—men who, under any circumstances, would have been induced to put his hand to such an arrangement as that which, to our shame, as I think now, has gone forth under the name of the Anglo-Turkish Convention."

Even stronger language followed, as Mr. Gladstone described the course of the English Government upon the subject of the treaty :

“It is perfectly well known that, if Russia is to attack India, which I for one believe to be a perfectly chimerical idea, she must attack India through the heart of Asia, and that is not through Asia Minor—it is on the other side of the Caspian, on the other side of Persia, far away from Asia Minor, and our defending Turkey in Asia Minor against Russia has no imaginable connection with driving Russia off the road to India, so that the absurdity of the arrangement is gross ; but it has other qualities worse than its absurdity—its duplicity. I say that it has been a work of duplicity, and what I tell you here I hope to restate next week—that this is an act of duplicity of which every Englishman should be ashamed. Why, what have we been doing? Why has the country been kept in hot water since the Treaty of San Stefano was signed? Because we insisted that no part of that treaty could be established without the consent of Europe, unless it affected the interior of the Turkish Empire, and we must have it brought before Europe. It was brought before Europe, accordingly, without reserve, and at that very time we ourselves, without the consent of Europe, were framing a secret engagement with Turkey—which interfered at every point with the Treaty of San Stefano—an act of duplicity which, I am sure, has never been surpassed, and, I believe, has rarely been equaled in the history of nations.”

“Mr. Gladstone’s denunciations of the Government,” says Mr. Smith, “have to some ap-

peared unmeasured and unwarrantable ; but those who thus judge him forget that, whether rightly or wrongly, his successors have traversed every political and financial principle to which he has steadfastly adhered through a public career extending over nearly half a century." Moreover, it may be said that they owe much of their polemical and personal character to the firm and settled conviction of Mr. Gladstone that the policy of Lord Beaconsfield had been derogatory to the honor and interests of England at home and abroad.

XV.

THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN OF 1879-'80.

THE electoral campaign which ended in the recent Conservative collapse may be fairly said to have begun with the great series of public speeches which Mr. Gladstone delivered during the agitation of the Eastern Question. These speeches were addressed to the people rather than to Parliament, and there can hardly be a doubt now that he had the people with him from the very start. A straw, which might very well have been taken as showing the direction in which the current was flowing, was furnished in 1878, when

Mr. Gladstone was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University by a vote of 1,153 to 609 for Sir Stafford Northcote, Lord Beaconsfield having been his predecessor in the office.

But it was not only in their dealings with the Eastern Question that Lord Beaconsfield's Government rendered themselves liable to Mr. Gladstone's attack. Their foreign policy was all of a piece, and in Asia and Africa, as well as in Europe, the effects were seen of an intermeddling, self-asserting, aggressive, and aggrandizing policy. The Treaty of Berlin had hardly dissipated the clouds that lowered upon the European horizon when a war was forced upon Afghanistan; and it seemed as if Lord Beaconsfield, conscious that Russia had been triumphant in Europe, had conceived the fantastic project of checkmating and humiliating her in Asia. Then, as if a winter campaign in the passes of the Himalaya were not enough, Sir Bartle Frere provoked a war with the Zulus; and, as a consequence of this, the one growing and progressive native state in South Africa was overthrown and disorganized.

Both the Afghan war and the Zulu war were vigorously condemned by Mr. Gladstone; and on these issues the Liberal party, which had been far from unanimous on the Eastern Question, once more drew together and presented a united front. In reference to Lord Beaconsfield's cynical explanation that the war against Afghanistan had

for its object a "scientific frontier," Mr. Gladstone said :

"What right have we to annex by war or to menace the territory of our neighbors, in order to make 'scientific' a frontier which is already safe? What should we say of such an act if done by another Power? Our frontier, we are told, causes anxiety to our viceroys. I ask, Which among the viceroys who have taken and quitted office, and sometimes life, with so much honor, since we reached our northwestern frontier, have recommended such a rectification? Upon the whole, I must say that the great day of 'sense and truth,' instead of relaxing the reserve unhappily maintained, has added a new, and, to all appearance, a dangerous, mystery to those which before prevailed; has left us more than ever at the mercy of anonymous paragraphs; and is, so far, likely to increase rather than dispel the gloom which is settling on the country. That we are bound to observe and promote the observance of the Treaty of Berlin, there is no doubt. We should do it with better grace if we had not ourselves broken the Treaty of Paris, and violated the honorable understanding under which the powers met in congress by the Anglo-Turkish Convention."

The financial policy of the Government—intimately connected as it was with its course on foreign affairs—was also energetically assailed by Mr. Gladstone. Sir Stafford Northcote's exchequer methods were exactly opposite to those of Mr. Gladstone at the time of the Crimean War. Mr. Gladstone's method was, as far as possible, to

make increased income meet increased expenditure ; Sir Stafford's method was to keep down current taxes while increasing the permanent obligations of the country by borrowing—thus disguising the real cost of the so-called Imperial policy.

A convenient summary of Mr. Gladstone's general indictment of the Beaconsfield Administration is to be found in a speech which he delivered at Chester, on the 19th of August, 1879 :

“ I hold that the faith and honor of the country have been gravely compromised by the foreign policy of the Ministry ; that, by the disturbance of confidence, and lately even of peace, which they have brought about, they have prolonged and aggravated public distress ; that they have augmented the power and interest of the Russian Empire, even while estranging the feelings of its population ; that they have embarked the Crown and people in an unjust war ; that their Afghan war is full of mischief, if not of positive danger, to India ; and that, by their use of the treaty - making and war - making powers of the Crown, they have abridged the just rights of Parliament, and have presented its prerogatives to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect, which tends to make it insecure.”

By the public discussion of these and similar topics, the popular mind was gradually being “ educated ” for that decisive struggle at the polls which could not—on account of the limitation of the existence of a Parliament to seven years—be

postponed beyond 1880. But the first formal opening of the campaign occurred toward the end of 1879, when Mr. Gladstone, having accepted the invitation of the Liberal electors of Midlothian to stand as their candidate, resolved to impeach the Ministry before the Scotch nation. Midlothian was one of the strongholds of Conservatism, and Mr. Gladstone's opponent was the son of the local magnate, the Duke of Buccleugh ; but the great Liberal orator resolved to make trial of what could be accomplished by the voice of reason and of eloquence, and during the fortnight between November 24th and December 3d he made his preliminary canvass.

Referring to this canvass, an author whom we have quoted before (Mr. Dunckley) says : " In the wonderful series of orations delivered in Midlothian we have a crowning instance of Mr. Gladstone's intellectual vigor and force of character. As a mere feat of bodily and mental prowess it stands unrivaled. A winter's journey to Scotland and the delivery of one great speech might have been considered enough to task the energies of a man who the other day passed the Biblical limit of three score years and ten. But Mr. Gladstone made several speeches on his way, slight skirmishes prelusive to the campaign, and on reaching the enemy's territory, from a secure base of operations at Dalmeny, he gave battle long and dire day after day for a week together, finishing up

with a few sprightly flourishings as he gayly retreated toward the hospitalities of Taymouth. It was a mere pastime then to write out his Lord Rector's address, and fling the sheets as fast as his pen glided over them to a literary aid-de-camp, who undertook to have them in type next day. In the academical prelection at Glasgow the political warrior figured in the equally familiar character of a man of letters; but before the day was over he had thrown off his robes, donned his armor, and was busily engaged in giving a few parting strokes to the enemy. On returning, as in going, he was waylaid at the principal stations, and while the train was getting ready the orator fired off his speech to applauding thousands. Taken as a whole, the exhibition is astounding. It is like a revelation of one of Nature's hitherto unsuspected marvels. We try to think of heroes with whom to compare him, but find none. The 'frame of adamant and soul of fire' were ascribed to a man of six-and-thirty, and Mr. Gladstone's achievement combines intellectual intrepidity with physical endurance. In this Midlothian campaign we have an illustration on the largest scale of that feature of his character which strikes us most, and the impression of which lasts longest with us. It is expressed in the word force, power in action."

The popular enthusiasm aroused by Mr. Gladstone everywhere that he went was a memorable

display ; and when he had finished, it was found that a flood had swept over Scotland, and that the Conservative landmarks were all under water. Nor were indications wanting that the interest and enthusiasm were shared by the people of England also. Yet at this very time the club men of London and many metropolitan journals were fatuously declaring that Mr. Gladstone's "violence" had irretrievably damaged his cause, and were echoing Lord Beaconsfield's sneer about the exuberance of his verbosity.

It was generally expected that Parliament would be dissolved during the recess, it being contrary to usage for the House of Commons to sit for more than six sessions ; but when, at the opening of the session of 1880, the Ministry submitted a lengthy and comprehensive programme of work, the public settled down upon the conclusion that dissolution would be postponed until the autumn. An unexpected difficulty, however, was encountered in the unpopularity of a Water bill introduced by Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary. Rather than face the discredit of certain defeat on this measure the Conservative leaders determined to dissolve Parliament at once. Nor were there wanting other inducements to this course. The state of Ireland was becoming daily more menacing ; the Conservative managers thought they had succeeded in fixing upon the Liberals the stigma of sympathy if not complicity with

the Home Rulers ; and several by-elections seemed to show that the popular reaction against Mr. Gladstone's "violence" had actually begun.

The second week in March Lord Beaconsfield wrote a letter to the Duke of Marlborough, the Viceroy of Ireland, announcing that her Majesty had determined to "revert to the sense of her people," defending the diplomacy whereby England had been enabled to maintain peace, "which rests on the presence, not to say the ascendancy, of England in the Councils of Europe," and expressing the fervent hope that the election would result in the return to Westminster of a Parliament "not unworthy of the power of England, and resolved to maintain it." On the 24th of March the official proclamation was issued, and a general election began, the results of which astonished the world, and none more than the Liberals themselves.

The more sanguine Liberals had counted upon materially thinning the ranks of Lord Beaconsfield's supporters, and the utmost that was even hoped was that a small majority might be secured ; but, as soon as the first returns began to come in, it was evident that a revolution had swept over the country, and that the Conservatives were smitten hip and thigh. An unprecedentedly large number of voters had gone to the polls ; and the new Parliament toward which Lord Beaconsfield had looked with such "fervent hope" re-

turned to Westminster with a Liberal majority of 114 (majority over Conservatives and Home Rulers combined, 52).

Commenting upon this result, the "London Spectator" said: "It was Mr. Gladstone's first great campaign in Midlothian which rallied the whole of Scotland to his side, and awakened the popular mind in England. His second great campaign in Midlothian definitively brought the whole people of England to understand how big an issue there was before the country, and how much it concerned every Englishman who loves justice and liberty to cast in his lot with Scotland in relation to the judgment to be delivered. Nothing can be more marked than the way in which the English constituencies, stirred by Mr. Gladstone's voice, have answered his appeal. He spoke in Marylebone, where a Tory headed the poll at the last election; all Marylebone was stirred to its depths, and two Liberals were returned, with two thousand votes to spare for the lower of the two. He spoke at Grantham, on his way to Scotland; and Grantham, where the representation was divided between a Liberal and a Conservative, has sent back two Liberals. He spoke at York; and York, where the representation was divided, has sent back two Liberals. He spoke at Newcastle; and Newcastle, where the representation was divided, has sent back two Liberals. He spoke at Berwick; and Berwick, where the rep-

resentation was divided, has returned two Liberals. So that not only in Scotland, where no one doubted the ascendancy of Mr. Gladstone's political convictions, but wherever he has been in popular contact with the English constituencies, the result has been equally decisive. We take it that we shall hear no more of the misfortunes which the Liberal party are to suffer as the result of Mr. Gladstone's 'exuberant verbosity.' As Sir W. Harcourt has very justly said, it is what Lord Beaconsfield termed Mr. Gladstone's 'exuberant verbosity' which has overthrown Lord Beaconsfield. The extraordinary vote which the constituencies have given, a vote which, even in its Conservative element has increased on the former vote by twelve per cent., and in its Liberal elements by thirty-nine per cent., is one due almost exclusively, we believe, to the effect which Mr. Gladstone's campaign has had in impressing on the whole country the great political stake at issue. It is Mr. Gladstone's voice which has roused the country, and Mr. Gladstone's conviction which has carried it. Like Achilles, when he left his tent, his mere cry scared the victors, as they then thought themselves, in the full heat of their assault. Like Achilles, when he entered the battle, everything has gone down before him, or rather, everything has seemed to ally itself with him and his cause." A confirmation of this is afforded by the fact that at all the election

speeches during the entire contest every mention of Mr. Gladstone's name "was received with vociferous and enthusiastic cheering."

The significance of these facts was seen in the events which immediately followed. Lord Beaconsfield, bowing gracefully to the national verdict of dismissal, did not wait for the meeting of Parliament, but resigned office at once. In accordance with usage the Queen then sent for Lord Hartington, the titular leader of the Liberal party; but both Lord Hartington and Lord Granville assured her Majesty that under the circumstances there was no possible Prime Minister but Mr. Gladstone. Yielding reluctantly to the logic of events—for it is understood that Mr. Gladstone is far from popular at court—the Queen finally sent for Mr. Gladstone, and the Great Commoner of our day has again become Premier under circumstances which make him as nearly a dictator as English constitutional usage will allow.

Thus striking and dramatic were the personal consequences of the election. In regard to its more intimate significance and more far-reaching effects, we may quote two widely different commendations. An "Eastern Statesman," writing in the "Contemporary Review," says: "Other oppressors of mankind have clothed their doings under some decent pretexts. If we read the treaties and state papers with which, as Gibbon and Sismondi have taught us, kings and ministers

have striven to deceive mankind, it is wonderful to see what exalted motives are professed for the very ugliest of doings. But the Government of Lord Beaconsfield were above this kind of thing. They saw no need to assume a virtue, to pay homage to virtue ; they boldly professed that interest, and not right, was their only standard. At the late election the intellectual sense of the nation declared that the so-called British interests were no British interests at all ; its moral sense declared that, if they were British interests, still British interests were not to be set before British duties and British honor. The victory, then, of the elections is preëminently a moral victory, a triumph of right over wrong. He who says this must of course expect to be scoffed at, whether by those who do not believe that there is any right or wrong at all, or by those who do not believe that a nation, as such, can be guided by the rules of right and wrong. Yet experience shows that the instincts of a people are most commonly right, and that, when a people goes astray, it is commonly from not having the right and wrong of the case fully set before it. The popular sympathy for the Turk in 1854 was not an unrighteous or ungenerous feeling ; it was simply a misguided feeling, based on a thoroughly wrong conception of the facts. This time the people have had the facts set before them with all truth and all clearness ; and they have judged accordingly.

Generally, then, the election is a victory of good over evil."

And a writer in the New York "Nation" more finely says: "There is one great feature about the election which may almost be called pathetic. The area of the globe over which the result was looked for with eager anxiety was, of course, very great, and illustrates strikingly the vastness of the Empire. But what gives a touch of splendor to the Liberal victory is that whole races in the East have seen it as a great light. To every Christian still groaning under Turkish rule it means speedy help and deliverance. To the Christians lately emancipated and to the Greeks it means the consolidation and maintenance of their freedom and independence. To the Hindus it means government for their own sake, and not for the gratification of foreign pride. For the Afghans it means a cessation of pillage and slaughter in aid of a 'scientific frontier.' To the Turk it means that he must be clean and honest and industrious, or die. These things must sweeten their triumph to the English Liberals, and would make it precious even if they did not know that it had probably put an end to the last effort that will ever be made on English soil to set up personal government and restore the mystery of statecraft."

XVI.

QUALITIES AS AN ORATOR.

A NUMBER of the most famous and characteristic specimens of Mr. Gladstone's eloquence have been introduced at various points in the preceding narrative ; in the present chapter we shall attempt to indicate and illustrate his position and qualities as an orator. "Among living competitors for the oratorical crown," says Mr. A. Hayward, in one of his "Essays," "the first place will be conceded without a dissenting voice to Mr. Gladstone. An excellent judge, a frequent opponent of his policy, whom we consulted, declared that it was Eclipse first and all the rest nowhere. He may lack Mr. Bright's impressive diction, impressive by its simplicity, or Mr. Disraeli's humor and sarcasm ; but he has made ten eminently successful speeches to Mr. Bright's or Mr. Disraeli's one. His foot is ever in the stirrup ; his lance is ever in the rest. He throws down the gauntlet to all comers. Right or wrong, he is always real, natural, earnest, unaffected, and unforced. He is a great debater, a great Parliamentary speaker ; with a shade more imagination, he would be a great orator."

Mr. Justin McCarthy demurs somewhat to

this verdict, but bears cordial testimony to Mr. Gladstone's wonderful powers. He says : " A distinguished critic once pronounced Mr. Gladstone to be the greatest Parliamentary orator of our time, on the ground that he had made by far the greatest number of fine speeches, while admitting that two or three speeches had been made by other men of the day which might rank higher than any of his. This is, however, a principle of criticism which posterity never sanctions. The greatest speech, the greatest poem, give the author the highest place, though the effort were but single. Shakespeare would rank beyond Massinger just as he does now had he written only 'The Tempest.' We can not say how many novels, each as good as 'Gil Blas,' would make Le Sage the equal of Cervantes. On this point fame is inexorable. We are not, therefore, inclined to call Mr. Gladstone the greatest English orator of our time when we remember some of the finest speeches of Mr. Bright ; but did we regard Parliamentary speaking as a mere instrument of Parliamentary business and debate, then unquestionably Mr. Gladstone is not only the greatest, but by far the greatest, English orator of our time ; for he had a richer combination of gifts than any other man we can remember, and he could use them oftenest with effect. He was like a racer which can not, indeed, always go faster than every rival, but can win more races in the year than any other

horse. Mr. Gladstone could get up at any moment, and no matter how many times a night, in the House of Commons, and be argumentative or indignant, pour out a stream of impassioned eloquence or a shower of figures, just as the exigency of the debate and the moment required. He was not, of course, always equal ; but he was always eloquent and effective. He seemed as if he could not be anything but eloquent. Perhaps, judged in this way, he never had an equal in the English Parliament. Neither Pitt nor Fox ever made so many speeches combining so many great qualities. Chatham was a great actor rather than a great orator. Burke was the greatest political essayist who ever addressed the House of Commons. Canning did not often rise above the level of burnished rhetorical commonplace. Macaulay, who during his time drew the most crowded houses of any speaker, not even excepting Peel, was not an orator in the true sense. Probably no one, past or present, had in combination so many gifts of voice, manner, fluency, and argument, style, reason, and passion as Mr. Gladstone."

That first qualification of an orator—voice—Mr. Gladstone possesses in perfection. One who has heard him often says : "As for his voice, it is like a silver clarion. And the charm of that harmonious voice is—that, after the delivery of a speech of four or five hours in its duration, and

(*teste* Hansard !) there have been such speeches, the closing words of the peroration will ring as clear as a bell upon the ear, without the faintest perceptible indication, to the last, of anything like physical exhaustion." And Mr. McCarthy says : " Such a voice would make commonplace seem interesting and lend something of fascination to dullness itself. It was singularly pure, clear, resonant, and sweet. The orator never seemed to use the slightest effort or strain in filling any hall and reaching the ear of the farthest among the audience. It was not a loud voice or of great volume ; but strong, vibrating, and silvery. The words were always aided by energetic action and by the deep gleaming eyes of the orator. Somebody once said that Gladstone was the only man in the House who could talk in italics. The saying was odd, but was nevertheless appropriate and expressive. Gladstone could by the slightest modulation of his voice give all the emphasis of italics, of small print, or large print, or any other effect he might desire, to his spoken words. It is not to be denied that his wonderful gift of words sometimes led him astray. It was often such a fluency as that of a torrent on which the orator was carried away. Gladstone had to pay for his fluency by being too fluent. He could seldom resist the temptation to shower too many words on his subject and his hearers. Sometimes he involved his sentence in paren-

thesis within parenthesis until the ordinary listener began to think extrication an impossibility ; but the orator never failed to unravel all the entanglements, and to bring the passage out to a clear and legitimate conclusion. There was never any halt or incoherency, nor did the joints of the sentence fail to fit together in the right way. Harley once described a famous speech as ‘a circumgyration of incoherent words.’ This description certainly could not be applied even to Mr. Gladstone’s most involved passages ; but if some of those were described as a circumgyration of coherent words, the phrase might be considered germane to the matter. His style was commonly too redundant. It seemed as if it belonged to a certain school of exuberant Italian rhetoric. Yet it was hardly to be called florid. Gladstone indulged in few flowers of rhetoric, and his great gift was not imagination. His fault was simply the habitual use of too many words. This defect was indeed a characteristic of the Peelite school of eloquence. Mr. Gladstone retained some of the defects of the school in which he had been trained, even after he had come to surpass its greatest master.

“ Often, however, this superb, exuberant rush of words added indescribable strength to the eloquence of the speaker. In passages of indignant remonstrance or denunciation, when word followed word, and stroke came down upon stroke,

with a wealth of resource that seemed inexhaustible, the very fluency and variety of the speaker overwhelmed his audience. Interruption only gave him a new stimulus, and appeared to supply him with fresh resources of argument and illustration. His retorts leaped to his lips. His eye caught sometimes even the mere gesture that indicated dissent or question ; and perhaps some unlucky opponent, who was only thinking of what might be said in opposition to the great orator, found himself suddenly dragged into the conflict and overwhelmed with a torrent of remonstrance, argument, and scornful words. Gladstone had not much humor of the playful kind, but he had a certain force of sarcastic and scornful rhetoric. He was always terribly in earnest. Whether the subject were great or small, he threw his whole soul into it. Once, in addressing a school-boy gathering, he told his young listeners that if a boy ran he ought always to run as fast as he could ; if he jumped, he ought always to jump as far as he could. He illustrated his maxim in his own career. He had no idea apparently of running or jumping in such measure as happened to please the fancy of the moment. He always exercised his splendid powers to the uttermost strain."

Of Mr. Gladstone's appearance and manner in speaking, Mr. Lucy—after quoting the description of the young man eloquent which we have our-

selves reproduced in its proper connection *—gives the following animated picture :

“It is curious to note that some of these mannerisms of forty years ago are preserved by the great statesman we know to-day. It is particularly notable that to this day, when Mr. Gladstone rises and begins what is intended to be a great oration, he has a tendency to clasp his hands behind his back. This attitude, however, like the subdued mood of which it is an indication, prevails only during the opening sentences. Age has fired rather than dulled his oratorical energy. He has even, during the existence of the present Parliament, increased in rapidity of gesture almost to the point of fury. The jet-black hair of forty years ago has faded and fallen, leaving only a few thin wisps of gray carefully disposed over the grandly formed head with which, as he told a Scotch deputation the other day, London hatters have had such trouble. The rounded cheeks are sunken, and their bloom has given place to pallor ; the full brow is wrinkled ; the dark eyes, bright and flashing still, are underset with innumerable wrinkles ; the ‘good figure’ is somewhat rounded at the shoulders ; and the sprightly step is growing deliberate. But the intellectual fire of forty years ago is rather quickened than quenched, and the promise of health has been abundantly fulfilled in a maintenance of physical strength and activity

* See page 36.

that seems phenomenal. Mr. Gladstone will out-sit the youngest member of the House if the issue at stake claims his vote in the pending division. He can speak for three hours at a stretch, and he will put in the three hours as much mental and physical energy as, judiciously distributed, would suffice for the whole debate. His magnificent voice is as true in tone and as insensible to fatigue as when it was first heard within the walls of the House. By comparison he is far more emphatic in gesture when addressing the House of Commons than when standing before a public meeting. This, doubtless, is explicable by the fact that, while in the one case he is free from contradiction, in the other he is, more particularly during a period of Tory ascendancy, outrageously subject to it. Trembling through every nerve with intensity of conviction and the wrath of battle, he almost literally smites his opponent hip and thigh. Taking the brass-bound box upon the table as representative of 'the right honorable gentleman' or 'the noble lord' opposite, he will beat it violently with his right hand, creating a resounding noise that sometimes makes it difficult to catch the words he desires to emphasize. Or, standing with heels closely pressed together, and feet spread out fan-wise, so that he may turn as on a pivot to watch the effect of his speech on either side of the House, he will assume that the palm of his left hand is his adversary of the moment, and straightway he

beats upon it with his right hand with a ferocity that causes to curdle the blood of the occupants of the Ladies' Gallery. At this stage will be noted the most marked retention of early House of Commons habit, in the way in which the orator continually turns round to address his own followers, to the outraging of a fundamental point of etiquette which requires that all speech should be directed to the Chair."

Another observer, writing some years ago in the "Gentleman's Magazine," says: "Mr. Gladstone's oratorical manner is much more strongly marked by action than is Mr. Bright's. He emphasizes by smiting his right hand in the open palm of his left; by pointing his finger straight out at his adversary, real or representative; and, in his hottest moments, by beating the table with his clenched hand. Sometimes in answer to cheers he turns right round to his immediate supporters on the benches behind him, and speaks directly to them; whereupon the Conservatives, who hugely enjoy a baiting of the emotional ex-Premier, call out 'Order! order!' This call seldom fails in the desired effect of exciting the right honorable gentleman's irascibility, and when he loses his temper his opponents may well be glad. Mr. Bright always writes out the peroration of his speeches, and at one time was accustomed to send the slip of paper to the reporters. Mr. Disraeli sometimes writes out the whole of his

speeches. The one he delivered to the Glasgow students in November, 1873, was in type in the office of a London newspaper at the moment the right honorable gentleman was speaking at the university. Mr. Gladstone never writes a line of his speeches, and some of his most successful ones have been made in the heat of debate, and necessarily without preparation. His speech in winding up the debate on the Irish University bill has rarely been excelled for close reasoning, brilliant illustration, and powerful eloquence ; yet if it be referred to it will be seen that it is for the greatest and best part a reply to the speech of Mr. Disraeli, who had just sat down, yielding the floor to his rival half an hour after midnight.

“Evidence of the same swift reviewing of a position, and of the existence of the same power of instantly marshaling arguments and illustrations, and sending them forth clad in a panoply of eloquence, is apparent in Mr. Gladstone’s speech when commenting on Mr. Disraeli’s announcement of the withdrawal of the main portion of the Endowed Schools Act Amendment bill. The announcement, and especially the manner in which it was made, was a surprise that almost stunned and momentarily bewildered the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone was bound to speak, and to speak the moment Mr. Disraeli resumed his seat. He had no opportunity to take counsel,

and no time to make preparations for his speech ; but the result of his masterly oration at this crisis was that the unpopularity and dissatisfaction created by the course he had taken in the matter of the Regulation of Public Worship bill melted like snow in the firelight, and the conviction was borne in upon his discontented followers that, as long as Mr. Gladstone lived and chose to hold the office, there was no other leader possible for the Liberal party."

"As a debater," says Mr. T. Wemyss Reid (in his "Cabinet Portraits"), "he [Mr. Gladstone] stands without a rival in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli possesses a brilliant wit and power of sarcasm to which he can lay no claim ; but no one who has seen Mr. Gladstone take his part in a great party battle will question his superiority as a debater to any of his rivals or colleagues. He is never seen to so much advantage as when, at the close of a long discussion, he rises in the midst of a crowded House impatient for the division to reply to Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Hardy. The readiness with which he replies to a speech just delivered is amazing. He will take up, one after another, the arguments of his opponent, and examine them and debate them with as much precision and fluency as though he had spent weeks in the preparation of his answer. Then, too, at such moments time is precious, and he is compelled to repress that tendency to

prolixity which is one of his greatest faults as an orator. His sentences, instead of wandering on interminably, are short and clear, and from beginning to end of the speech there is hardly a word which seems unnecessary.

“The excitement, too, which prevails around him always infects him strongly; his pale face twitches, his magnificent voice quivers, his body sways from side to side as he pours forth argument, pleading, and invective, strangely intermingled. The storm of cheers and counter-cheers rages around him, as it can rage nowhere except in the House of Commons on such an occasion, but high and clear above the tumult rings out his voice, like the trumpet sounding through the din of the battle-field. As he draws to a close something like a calm comes over the scene, and upon both sides men listen eagerly to his words, anxious to catch each sentence of his peroration, always delivered with an artistic care which only one other member of Parliament can equal, and seldom failing to impress the House with its beauty. Then it is that his great powers are seen to the fullest advantage—voice and accent and gesture all giving force and life to the words which he utters.

“And having upon such an occasion seen him in the most favorable light, let the reader go into the House of Commons during the ‘question hour,’ set apart for the torture of ministers, if he

wishes to see how very different an appearance he can make under other circumstances. The art of answering questions is by no means to be despised by a Cabinet Minister ; but of all the great ministers we have had in recent times, Mr. Gladstone has the least knowledge of that art. His great fault is that he does not know when to stop. Having, in reply to some troublesome questioner, made what seems to be an explicit declaration of his intentions, instead of sitting down, as Mr. Disraeli would do under similar circumstances, he proceeds forthwith to explain, at interminable length, the alternative courses open to him, the reasons why none of those courses was suitable, and the arguments in favor of that which he has decided to adopt. On and still on he goes, with an unbroken fluency, and with a command of language which is marvelous, until a shade of weariness steals over the faces of his colleagues on the Treasury Bench, and honorable gentlemen opposite unceremoniously show that they have heard enough by entering into a brisk conversation with each other."

This tendency to undue copiousness was amusingly illustrated by Mr. Shirley Brooks in an article which he contributed to the "Quarterly Review" in 1854. Speaking of Mr. Gladstone's mode of answering questions, Mr. Brooks says : "He points his finger, as one who is not going to let you off until you quite understand the subject,

and then he explains it to you at such length, and with such a *copia verborum*, that you feel quite ashamed of the unreasonable trouble you have given to a man who has so much else to attend to. . . . His answers contrast a good deal with those of Lord Palmerston. Supposing each statesman to be asked what day the session would be over, the Viscount would reply that it was the intention of her Majesty to close the session on the 18th of August. Mr. Gladstone would possibly premise that, inasmuch as it was for her Majesty to decide upon the day which would be acceptable to herself, it was scarcely compatible with Parliamentary etiquette to ask the Minister to anticipate such a decision ; but, presuming that he quite understood the purport of the right honorable gentleman's question, of which he was not entirely assured, the completion of the duties of the House of Commons, and the formal termination of the sittings of the Legislature, were two distinct things. He would say that her Majesty's Minister had represented to the Queen that the former would probably be accomplished about the 18th of August, and that such day would not be unfavorable for the latter ; and, therefore, if the Sovereign should be pleased to ratify that view of the case, the day he had named would be probably that inquired after by the right honorable gentleman."

Mr. Hayward also refers to this characteristic, but in a more genial spirit. " Mr. Gladstone,"

he says, "is more Ciceronian than Demosthenic. Amplification, not condensation, is his forte ; but he can be fanciful or pithy on occasion ; as when, in a budget speech, he compared his arrival at the part in which the remissions of taxation were to be announced, to the descent into the smiling valleys of Italy after a toilsome ascent of the Alps ; or when he said that it was the duty of the Minister to stand ' like a wall of adamant ' between the people and the Crown. His graceful reply to Mr. Chaplin will compensate for many a hasty reproof administered to assailants whom he had better have left unnoticed :

" ' The honorable member who has just sat down has admonished us, and myself in particular, that the sense of justice is apt to grow dull under the influence of a long Parliamentary experience. But there is one sentiment which I can assure him does not grow dull under the influence of a long Parliamentary experience, and that is the sense of pleasure when I hear—whether upon these benches or upon those opposite to me—an able, and at the same time frank, ingenuous, and manly statement of opinion, and one of such a character as to show me that the man who makes it is a real addition to the intellectual and moral worth and strength of Parliament. Having said this, I express my thanks to the honorable member for having sharply challenged us. It is right that we should be so challenged, and we do not shrink from it.' "

XVII.

QUALITIES AS A PARTY LEADER.

“WE have said,” writes Mr. Wemyss Reid,* “that Mr. Disraeli was a great party leader. To party leadership, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, Mr. Gladstone can lay no claim. Mr. Gladstone has many of the best qualities of a great leader. Like Mr. Disraeli, he can inspire on the part of his followers a high degree of personal enthusiasm. Out of doors he has a still greater command over the popular feeling than Mr. Disraeli; nor is that fact to be accounted for by any question of politics. For while Mr. Disraeli’s qualities, however much they may be admired by cultivated men of all political opinions, are ‘caviare to the general,’ Mr. Gladstone’s are essentially popular. He has the passion, the enthusiasm, the fluency of speech, the apparent simplicity of action which are so dearly loved by the multitude. His name can be made a tower of strength for his party; it might be adopted as the watchword or the rallying cry of a nation.

“But in the House of Commons he finds the task of leading a majority one which is almost beyond his grasp, and in which he is only saved from the most serious blunders by the watchfulness

* In his “Cabinet Portraits.”

of friends and colleagues. Partly, this is unquestionably due to the fact that he is incapable of making any allowances for the weaknesses of his fellow creatures. He has great strength of his own ; his soul, when he is engaged on any question of importance, is filled with an earnestness which is almost heroic, and he sees only one road to the end at which he aims—the shortest. Under these circumstances, he is incapable of understanding how any of his followers, who share his creed, and profess to be anxious to reach the same goal as himself, can demur to the path which he is taking. For their individual crotchets he makes no allowances, and he is especially regardless of the unwillingness of the English gentleman to be driven in any particular direction.

“It is curious to see as the result of this how much needless irritation he succeeds at times in causing among his followers. Over and over again the Liberal clubs have rung with complaints of his overbearing manner, of his ‘temper’—it ought, rather, to be ‘temperament’—of his want of consideration for the ideas, the foibles, the prejudices of the rank and file of his party. The general result is that he makes a bad leader. Indeed, it would be safer to say that he does not lead at all, in the common sense of the word ; others lead for him. He has another weakness, which is strangely irritating, not perhaps to the majority, but, at any rate, to a very considerable

minority, of his followers ; we mean his abhorrence of such a thing as humor. He makes jests himself at times, and occasionally they are good ones ; but they are grim and ponderous jokes, such as one might expect to circle round the board of a funeral feast rather than in any livelier assemblage, and the fierceness of manner with which they are delivered, and the supernatural solemnity of his countenance, as he makes them, render it necessary that the man who ventures to laugh at them should have a bold heart. As to such a thing as humor in others, he can not see it. More than once, when the House has been convulsed with laughter, at some exquisite bit of 'chaff'—to use a slang phrase—on the part of Mr. Disraeli, he has risen, and in the most grave and emphatic manner replied seriously to the lively sarcasm of his foe.

“Then there is his ‘temper.’ We hear a great deal—as it seems to us a great deal more than we ought to hear—about ‘Gladstone’s temper.’ Even Liberal journals and Liberal members are fond of dwelling upon his hasty temper, and it seems to be taken for granted that the Prime Minister is one of those peevish and passionate men who make life a misery to those around them. The clubs dwell with much emphasis upon his arrogance and his domineering disposition ; and every little outburst of strong feeling which he displays is spoken of as though it were nothing more than that very

contemptible thing—a fit of anger. As we have already said, it ought, it appears to us, to be Mr. Gladstone's temperament rather than his temper that should be held accountable for these occasional outbursts of which so much is made by those around him. That he is one of those finely strung men of very tender susceptibilities, to whom the prick of a pin is more torture than the heaviest of downright blows, is certain. Equally certain is it that he has a will of enormous strength—Lord Salisbury has spoken of it in Parliament as an 'arrogant will,' and it is undoubtedly in the Cabinet a dominant will—that he holds, in a very considerable degree, the doctrine that the end justifies the means, and that he is in the heat of debate the victim of an impetuosity which sometimes hurries him into false positions, from which he is generally too proud to retreat afterward.

“ But against these serious failings of temperament must be set the enthusiasm which is also a part of his nature, and which, when he has really worked himself up to boiling-point on a great question, he can always communicate to his followers; and the resolution which enables him to persevere with any work he has undertaken in the face of difficulties which would overwhelm most men. As a minister in charge of a great measure, one to which he has devoted the whole strength of his wonderful mind, he has not an

equal. When Mr. Gladstone gives himself with all his earnestness—and he is the most earnest man now living in England—to a great public question, he shows a knowledge, an ability, a power in handling it, a grasp at once of the greatest principles and of the smallest details, a readiness to comprehend the objections raised to particular provisions of the bill, a fertility of resources in providing remedies for those objections, which no other English statesman can pretend to possess.”

To a similar effect is the testimony of Mr. H. W. Lucy. Mr. Gladstone, he remarks, “has always been at a disadvantage as compared with his great rival in respect of personal manner. He was always too much in earnest to pay a just measure of attention to those little courtesies which count for much even in the government of an empire on which the sun never sets. It would perhaps be an exaggeration to say that Lord Beaconsfield is never in earnest; but it is unquestionable that he is never so much exhausted by earnestness that he forgets to pay those petty homages which cost so little, and to the leader of a party are worth so much. Mr. Gladstone’s gaze was fixed far above heads of mortal men, and the natural consequence was that when he moved about his daily work he frequently knocked up against his own friends and trod upon their corns.”

XVIII.

QUALITIES AS AN AUTHOR.

SPEAKING of those "practical politicians" who are at no pains to conceal their contempt for the "literary man"—a class not unknown even in England—Mr. Henry Dunckley says: "As a matter of fact, literature has strong affinities with politics, and when pursued seriously helps to make a man a 'practical politician.' For literature does not concern itself with abstract speculation. It does not even profess to search for truth. Its material is written thought. Its object is to understand the ideas which have come down to us from many generations of thinkers, and to pay meet honor to what is best. The man of letters lives in communion with the representative men of every age who have left their thoughts in books; and so long as mind governs the world and thought molds action, so long will literature lie close to politics. There is a sense in which the man of letters may be the most practical of politicians. He comes fresh to the problems of politics, and is disposed to regard them simply as problems to be solved. He is apt to fall in with the more ardent temper of the age, and to be willing to cut the knot which can not be untied. As a man of ideas he is fertile in expedients.

Hence, at revolutionary eras, or on those rare occasions when some upas-tree has to be cut down, there is no more formidable foe to Conservatism than a political man of letters."

The truth of this is very strikingly exemplified in the career of Mr. Gladstone, who has always found the field of politics and the domain of letters lying closely contiguous to each other. In both he has labored industriously and garnered a generous harvest; and if he has carried into literature the practicality of aim and sanity of judgment that come from familiarity with the great affairs of men and nations, his political oratory has gained much in variety and opulence from his knowledge and practice of literature.

The more important literary productions of Mr. Gladstone have been dealt with elsewhere, in connection with the narrative of his life; but besides these, which required separate mention, he has contributed copiously to the periodicals of the day, and has delivered many addresses on topics connected with art, literature, and education. Within the past year the whole of his miscellaneous writings—with the exception of essays of a strictly controversial and classical kind—have been collected in a uniform edition under the title of "Gleanings of Past Years."

They fill seven volumes, of which the first is entitled "The Throne and the Prince Consort; the Cabinet and the Constitution," and contains

no fewer than four articles on the life and character of the Prince Consort, two of them being based upon Mr. Martin's "Life." These are followed by three papers on the County Franchise, being a response to the deliverances of Mr. Lowe upon this subject. The last essay in the volume is the one entitled "Kin Beyond Sea," which aroused such controversy both in this country and in England on its appearance originally in the "North American Review" for September, 1878. The second volume comprises essays of a personal and literary character, and is the most interesting of the series. In it are excellent critical papers on Macaulay, Tennyson, Blanco White, Dr. Norman Macleod, and Giacomo Leopardi, and an admirable address on Wedgwood, originally delivered at Burslem, Staffordshire, on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Wedgwood Institute. The latter is especially valuable as showing Mr. Gladstone's knowledge of and sympathy for art. The third volume contains essays of an historical and speculative character, the most important of them being a series on *Ecce Homo*, which are written with eloquence and power. The next volume ("Foreign Essays") deals with topics of recent or current interest in politics and statesmanship, and contains, besides the letters to Lord Aberdeen on the Neapolitan prisons, articles on "Germany, France, and England," on "The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem," on

Montenegro, and on "Aggression in Egypt and Freedom in the East." The remaining volumes consist of essays mostly (but not exclusively) of a theological or ecclesiastical character. In the seventh volume are the Chapter of Autobiography, hitherto referred to, the admirable Inaugural Address delivered to the students of Edinburgh University in 1860, and the address on "The Place of Ancient Egypt in the Providential Order."

The most satisfactory estimate of these miscellaneous writings, and of Mr. Gladstone's quality as a man of letters, that we have seen, appeared a few months ago in "Fraser's Magazine," and from this article we shall quote the more important passages :

"Perhaps the first, and in some respects the highest, intellectual quality which marks these essays, is their varied energy of thought. There is no sign of weariness, of languor, or even repose in them, but everywhere the throb of a fresh, powerful, and unsated intellectual impulse. A genuine life of thought moves in them all. It is impossible for any serious reader not to be touched by their depth and force of sentiment, and the frequent vigor and eloquence, if also the occasional clumsiness and complexity, of their language. Mr. Gladstone writes always as from a full mind, in this respect alone taking at once a higher position than that of many contemporary writers. It is no conventional or professional

impulse that animates his pen ; he has always something to say, and which he is eager to say ; he is so moved by his thought, whatever it is, that he brings all the forces of his mind to bear upon it. He never dallies, seldom pauses over a subject ; still less does he, after a prevalent modern fashion, touch it all round with satiric and half-real allusion, as if it were rather a bore to touch it at all, and not of much consequence what conclusion the writer or the reader came to, after all. There is not a trace of *persiflage* in any of the essays. There is, in fact, far too little play of mind—too much of the Scotch quality of *weight*. It is well to be earnest. In this respect it is nothing less than a relief to turn from the silly and inconsecutive sentence-making of much of our present writing to Mr. Gladstone's moving and powerful pages. But they are frequently fatiguing from the very weight and hurry of their energy. And if sentence-making in itself be but a poor business with which no man will occupy himself who has much to say, it is yet, so far, an indispensable element in all literature. And Mr. Gladstone, as we may have occasion to point out before we close, too often neglects it. He lacks the special instinct of style, or the repressive art which restricts the outflow of energy in all the highest writers, as indeed in every creation of genius—withdrawing the glowing conception within the “mold of form.” But of this again.

In the mean time it is not the negative, but the positive aspect of his writings that we are noticing.

“The quality of energy characteristic of Mr. Gladstone’s essays is impressed on them from the first. It is perhaps their chief literary quality to the last—and the volumes before us cover a period of not less than thirty-five years. It would have been better in some respects if the author had contented himself with a chronological arrangement. But there are few writers who less stand in need of being estimated chronologically. In expounding the ‘Evangelical Movement’ in 1879, he is very much the same expositor as when he dealt at length with ‘The Present Aspect of the Church’ in 1843. If in the former paper his attitude is different, he yet speaks in both from the same background of substantial conviction. His views are as fully formed in the one case as in the other. Nothing is more remarkable, in fact, in these essays than the immovable background of opinion which everywhere crops through them. Whatever may have been the vacillations of Mr. Gladstone’s political career, there has been but little change in his more inward and higher thought. We do not know any other writer of the day who has remained more steadfast through a generation and a half to the same central principles.

“Nor is it merely that there is little change

or growth in his central thought; there is but little change in his manner as a writer. He writes with the same rhetorical fullness in the end as in the beginning—with the same energy and glow, and excessive, at times inelegant, movement. If there is any difference in this respect, it is certainly not in favor of the papers of his more mature years. For with the same force and intensity of thought these papers are, upon the whole, less duly proportioned, less harmonized. More literary care, apparently, has been taken in the preparation of the remarkable series which fill the fruitful decade following 1843 than in some of his recent productions. We would notice for their literary characteristics the articles on ‘Blanco White,’ in 1845, and on ‘Leopardi,’ in 1850; and we must add to these, although of later origin, the articles on ‘Tennyson’ and ‘Macaulay.’ If any one wishes to see Mr. Gladstone at his best as a man of letters, let him read these articles, especially the two last mentioned. They are intense and powerful, radiant with all his peculiar energy of conception; but they are also stamped by a special impress of literary form. The vivid and impetuous march of thought is held within bounds. The writer is less swept along by the force of his ideas; the rein is laid upon them, and they beat step to a more harmonious pace. . . .

“Next to the energy of Mr. Gladstone’s

writing in an ascending scale may be mentioned its constant elevation and frequent ideality of sentiment. On the descending scale his energy is apt to pass into sheer intensity and rhetoric. The 'Never, never, never,' which he borrows from Lord Chatham, and would even emphasize in its repetition, is the note of a manner which rises naturally to vehemence, and the strong rush of words sometimes passes off into shrillness. He can realize for the time little or nothing but the idea which moves him, and it expands and glows till, like an illuminated cloud, it fills the whole heaven of his thought and casts on his page an intense shadow 'dark with excessive bright.' But his manner of thought, if rhetorical and vehement, is always elevated. It never sinks to frivolity, seldom to commonplace ; it ranges at a high level. 'Whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave ; whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without or the wily subtilties and reflexes of men's thoughts from within'—such things are the main haunt of our author's literary spirit, and his pen aspires to describe them with a 'solid and treatable smoothness.' Even Milton had no higher conception of the business of literature than he has, and his example so far, no less than in the thoroughness and energy of his work, is of special value. For that we are 'moving downward' in this respect, if not in

others, can hardly be doubted. Lightness of touch, if it be also skillful and delicate, is a distinct merit. It saves trouble. It attracts casual readers who might otherwise not read at all. It soon passes, indeed, into a trick, and becomes the feeble if pointed weapon of every newspaper critic. But when to lightness of touch are added lightness of subject and frequent emptiness of all higher thought, the descent becomes marked indeed ; and literature, from being the lofty pursuit imaged by the great Puritan, becomes a mere pastime in no degree higher than many others.

“ Mr. Gladstone never descends to the flippant facility to which the mere passions and gossip of the hour are an adequate theme. He not only deals in all his essays with worthy subjects, but he always deals with them in a worthy manner, so far at least as his tastes and sympathies are concerned. If by no means always true or just in his judgments, it is yet always what is noble in character, and pure and lofty in sentiment, and dignified in feeling that engages his admiration. His pen fastens naturally on the higher attributes of mind and action in any figure that he draws ; and this too, as in the sketches of Lord Macaulay, the Prince Consort, and Dr. Norman Macleod, where it is plain he has only an imperfect sympathy with the type of character as it comes from his pen. On this very account these portraits are the more interesting, and test more directly

the genuineness of his high capacity of appreciation. . . .

“ We have spoken of the ideality, no less than the elevation of sentiment, which frequently marks Mr. Gladstone’s ‘Gleanings.’ He is not merely attracted by what is noble and great in sentiment, and all the fairer traits of our higher nature, but there is an elevated and poetic glow at times in such criticisms as those on Leopardi and Tennyson, which carry their author beyond the mere critical sphere, and show that he is capable of being touched to finer issues. As a student of Homer and Dante, he is familiar with the loftiest and richest poetic ideals; and these ideals have evidently sunk deep into his mind. They have bred in him a kindred enthusiasm, and, what is more, an enthusiasm which is capable of being fired alike by the heroism of Hellenic and the humilities of Christian virtue. He is entirely free from the classical *furor* which has been rampant in many quarters of late, and whose craze is a return to mere pagan ideals. Unlike Leopardi and the pessimist school, which may be said to date from him, he has fed his genius ‘on the Mount of Zion’ not less than ‘on the Mount of the Parthenon,’ ‘by the brook of Cedron’ no less than ‘by the waters of Ilissus.’ While recognizing the prophetic element in Homer, and enraptured by his exquisite creations—and no one has described them with a more vivid and brightly tintured

pencil—he yet bows before the higher prophetic genius of Isaiah, and sees in the marvelous ideals of Christian poets, from Dante to Tennyson, a more perfect bloom of the human mind and character. . . .

“But we must draw this paper to a close with a special glance at Mr. Gladstone’s literary style. It is powerful, flexible, and elaborately if not gracefully expressive. It has all the vigor and swell of the substance of his thought. But, just as he often seems to be thinking on his legs and casting forth in an impetuous cataract the current of his ideas, so does his style move with uneasy, and swaying, and often too vehement force—a force always more or less rhetorical, often pictured and eloquent, but sometimes singularly clumsy, and seldom facile or delicate. Yet he surprises the reader at times by a happy figure, touched lightly and beautifully, as when he says of the confidential outpourings of Bishop Patteson, in his letters to his sister at home, that they were ‘like flowers caught in their freshness, and perfectly preserved in color and in form.’

“We confess to having formed a higher idea than we had of Mr. Gladstone’s powers as a mere writer by an attentive perusal of these ‘Gleanings.’ The first impression one gets of his style is disappointing. It looks fatiguing. It does not invite, nor does it readily lead the reader along, even when he has yielded to the impulse and felt

the fascination of a strong mind. But at last it lays hold of the attention. We are caught in its sweep, and made to feel that we are in the hands of a master who knows his subject and will not let us go till he has brought us to some share of his own knowledge. We may feel not unfrequently that he is far more subtile than true, more ingenious in theory than penetrating in insight, more intent on making out a case than in going to the root of a difficulty ; that he is conventional rather than critical, and traditional where he ought to be historical ; still, there is the glow of an intense genius everywhere, and the splendor of a rhetoric which often rises into passion and never degenerates into meanness. . . . If we are to estimate writing not merely by the momentary pleasure it gives, but by the elevation and moral as well as mental stimulus it imparts, we must attach a high value to many of Mr. Gladstone's essays. It would be difficult to say how far they may survive as monuments of his literary genius. They are more likely to do so, we believe, than his Homeric speculations, labors of love and special knowledge as these are. But, whatever may be their fate, they are remarkable and marvelously interesting as products of literary devotion and ambition in a mind of intense activity, amid the pauses of a great public career."

XIX.

PERSONAL TRAITS.

IN the case of a living man it is not possible if we would (nor would it be justifiable if we could) to make those intimate personal revelations which constitute the chief charm of biography ; and Mr. Gladstone, though he has lived, as it were, in the full blaze of publicity, has been singularly successful in protecting his private and domestic life from the intrusions of vulgar curiosity. For this very excellent reason, therefore, the present chapter must necessarily be somewhat meagre and inadequate.

Of Mr. Gladstone's personal appearance when, at the age of twenty-nine, he was first getting his feet firmly planted upon the ladder of fame, we have already given a sketch in Chapter III. Of the impression which in his later years he makes upon the beholder, Mr. T. W. Higginson gives the following interesting glimpse : "When an American, on visiting the House of Commons for the first time, studies with eagerness the face of the great Liberal statesman, his first impression must be, I should think, not so much 'How fine ! how intellectual !' as 'how un-English ! how American !' Mr. Disraeli himself, though far remoter from the prevailing English type, is hardly more

distinctly separated from it than is Mr. Gladstone. The more highly charged nervous organization, the greater sensitiveness, the mobility, the subtlety of mind that we habitually attribute, with or without reason, to the American type—these all are visible, at the very first glance, in him. For myself, on the only occasion when I had the honor of meeting Mr. Gladstone in his own house, I was haunted throughout the interview with an increasing resemblance to another face and voice, till at last it almost seemed that it was Ralph Waldo Emerson with whom I was talking.”

Still more vivid is the following passage from an English writer who some years ago described the *personnel* of the Gladstone Government : “ When Mr. Gladstone first entered the House of Commons, in the heyday of his youth, his looks earned for him the sobriquet, which he preserved in effect for some years afterward, of ‘ Handsome Gladstone.’ The handsome looks are gone, but it is a noble face for all that—a nobler countenance than it was then in its early bloom and freshness. Lined with thought ; paled by years of toil ; the dark hair thinned ; the dark eyes caverned under brows habitually contracted—it is essentially the face of a senator, one of the ‘ *Patres Conscripti*.’ And there are subtle traits of character, readily enough discernible at a glance by those who care to look for them, subtle though they are, in those nervous lineaments ; a blending of generosity and

scorn in the play of the nostrils, an alternating severity and sweetness in the mobile mouth. It is a face betraying every emotion, concealing nothing—incapable of concealment. We speak of this as of something not by any means to a debater's, and still less to a party leader's advantage. It is a very considerable and perpetual disadvantage to Mr. Gladstone. He 'wears his heart upon his sleeve, for daws to peck at.' He will visibly writhe under an ungenerous taunt while it is being uttered. His visage darkens with indignation while his adversary is yet speaking."

And Mr. Wemyss Reid says : " Mr. Gladstone's face differs strangely from that of his great rival. It is the most mobile and expressive countenance in the House of Commons ; it can no more conceal the thought flitting through the brain behind it than the mirror can refuse to reflect the figure placed before it ; it is incapable of reserve or of mystery ; hope, fear, anxiety, exultation, anger, pleasure, each of these in turn is ' writ large ' upon it, so that the spectator watching it closely can read in it, as in a book, the varying thoughts and feelings of him to whom it belongs. And the face is in the highest degree characteristic of the man. There never was a statesman more impulsive than the present Prime Minister ; never one who took less pains to hide the workings of his mind from those around him, or who was more determined to wear his heart upon his sleeve. His openness in

this respect is at once his fault and his virtue. It is an error in any man to whom are committed great destinies, and the policy of a mighty nation, and we can not wonder that his critics should often have complained of it. But it has at the same time redeemed not a few of the mistakes and inconsistencies of his career, and has given the world evidence of the fact that, however impulsive and at times imprudent he may be, he is at least thoroughly sincere, even in his most impulsive actions."

For many years past Mr. Gladstone's residence, when not in London, has been at Hawarden, a property which came to him through his wife. "Hawarden Castle," says Mr. Lucy, "is charmingly situated on the estuary of the Dee. It was for a long time the property of the Stanley family, but after the execution of the Earl of Derby, in 1651, it was purchased by Sergeant Glynne, who seems to have held the scales of justice so evenly that he was made Lord Chief Justice by Cromwell, and knighted by Charles II. The entrance lodges are about six miles from Chester, and one mile from the castle. The road through the park is open to the public, and is of singular beauty. The castle is about a century old, but was remodeled in 1809, the year when Mr. Gladstone was born, and a Tudor character, as the style was then understood, was given to it. Hawarden Church is a large and very fine example of the architecture of

unimportant

the early part of the sixteenth century, though some parts appear to be considerably older ; but it suffered from a fire comparatively recently, and a great part of it has been rebuilt. The rectory is one of the most valuable in the kingdom, and is held by a son of Mr. Gladstone's, who, if the testimony of the very extensive parish is to be relied on, is as hard-working and simple in his way of life as ever Goldsmith's country parson was. The Hawarden estates, which extend for some miles along the estuary of the Dee, contain many landscapes of great beauty, but, though easily accessible, they are little visited by artists or tourists. In the park are the remains of the ancient residence : some of the foundations are of great antiquity. It was granted by William the Conqueror to his nephew, Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, and it conferred the title of Earl of Chester upon the royal family. Some of the remains would seem to indicate the architecture that prevailed in Henry II's time."

Mr. Gladstone's study at Hawarden is a handsome room crammed with books, busts, pictures, and other *bric-à-brac*, and having ivy-hung windows commanding a beautiful prospect. His table is always covered with manuscripts, and his chairs heaped with newspapers. "The extent of Mr. Gladstone's daily intellectual labors," says Mr. Smith, "has been matter of very general surprise. That which he has accomplished was,

indeed, only possible under strict rule and method. From his earliest years of study each day has seen fulfilled its due share of work. At Oxford he was an exception to undergraduate life, and 'did not break off his morning studies at the regulation luncheon hour of one o'clock. It mattered not where he was, in college rooms or in country mansion; from 10 A. M. to 2 P. M. no one ever saw William Ewart Gladstone. He was locked up with his books. From the age of eighteen to the age of twenty-one he never missed these precious four hours except when he was traveling. And his ordeal in the evening was not less severe. Eight o'clock saw him once more engaged in a stiff bout with Aristotle, or plunged deep in the text of Thucydides.' The habit of assimilating knowledge has been constant with him, in all places and at all seasons, from the first day of his college life until now. He has always been an early man, and—quoting now from an interesting article which appeared shortly after Mr. Gladstone's resignation of the Liberal leadership—'since his retirement in Flintshire, he is, if possible, earlier than before. Shortly after eight o'clock in the morning he walks down to prayers in the village church. Early devotion and breakfast over, the remainder of the morning, till the gong sounds at two o'clock, is devoted to work—to reading, writing, meditation, or to the performance of arithmetical feats which no Cabinet Min-

ister has ever surpassed.' Luncheon over, there is more reading; or, 'if there be visitors in the house, pleasant gossip; or, if the weather be tempting, long walks to be taken, or tough oaks to be hewn. Loving air and exercise, Mr. Gladstone is a singularly temperate man in meat and drink. Still, he is only abstemious, not ascetic. A glass or two of claret at dinner, and sometimes a glass of port, that nectar of orators, satisfy his very moderate requirements for stimulant.' His recreation in retirement is such as befits a strong and muscular frame. Mr. Gladstone wields the axe with the skill of an experienced workman. 'Sawing wood has long been known as an excellent exercise, but it is dull work compared with the pleasure of striking at a huge tree, putting out of question the possibility of mentally coupling with each well-aimed blow the destruction of a political opponent. In wood-cutting *déshabillé*, so little does the lord of the soil look like himself that he has often been accosted by "practical" hands, and received, meekly as is his wont, a lesson from them, the practical man remaining all the while ignorant of the manner of man he was addressing. In his moments of mental and physical relaxation, the Napoleon of oratory (whose heavy artillery is always brought up at the right moment) and the champion of amateur woodmen vanish into the genial host, whose high spirits break out at every moment, and who is never more

rejoiced than when he can play a comedy part on his own or his son's lawn.' Further, it has been observed that the frank and free manner of Mr. Gladstone, his liberality in throwing open Hawarden Park to the public, and the deep interest he takes in all local improvements, 'have made him one of the best beloved of English celebrities. On Sunday morning, as the bells of Hawarden Church ring out through the heavy autumn air, vigorous pedestrians may be observed marching up the hill, their dusty raiment and shiny countenances proclaiming that their walk to church has been a long one. This determination toward Hawarden as a place of devotion is not owing to a dearth of churches in the neighborhood. There are churches at Mold and elsewhere, but in none of these are the lessons read in the sonorous tones of the ex-Premier of England.' "

Mr. Smith informs us further that Mr. Gladstone's personal charity is proverbial, and that his generosity has not been bounded by pecuniary limits. He is among those who believe in Christianity as a living, vitalizing force in the individual, and he has endeavored practically to illustrate its influence. He is always accessible to those who are in need of help and advice; and it is stated that "even when Prime Minister of England he has been found in the humblest houses, reading to the sick or dying consolatory passages of Scripture in his soft, melodious tones." His service to the

State, too, has been marked by the same unselfishness as his private life. "When Prime Minister he resisted a motion for increase of salary in the House of Commons, and when he left office he sought for no pension, although the numerous claims upon him were understood to have compelled the sale of his very remarkable collection of valuable china and articles of *vertu*. . . . We have reason to believe that when he retired from office, and made an investigation into the condition of his affairs, Mr. Gladstone discovered that the house in Carlton Terrace, which he had inhabited for eighteen years, was beyond his means. He therefore parted with it, and obtained a smaller house in Harley Street. This change from a roomy mansion to one comparatively humble entailed almost as a necessary consequence parting with his collections, though, as we have seen, this was also part of the prudential plan. The loss of his collections—the gradual accumulation of years—must have been a great one, for his lively appreciation of art has not been confined to public addresses on that subject; books, china, and pictures are treasures which he has ever regarded with peculiar affection, and which he has always delighted to have around him in lavish profusion."

Mr. Justin McCarthy thinks that the principal defect of Mr. Gladstone's mind is "a lack of simplicity, a tendency to over-refining and super-

subtle argument.” And Mr. A. Hayward says : “ The extreme subtlety of his mind, while supplying him with an inexhaustible store of replies and rejoinders, caused him to rely too much on over-refined distinctions and on casuistical modes of reasoning. During Garibaldi’s visit to London, it was suggested that a noble and richly jointured widow, who was much about with him, should marry him. To the objection that he had a wife living, the ready answer was, ‘ Oh, he must get Gladstone to explain her away.’ ”

At the same time, neither this over-subtlety, nor his great change of political views, has ever induced any one seriously to question Mr. Gladstone’s sincerity and honesty of motive. Says Mr. McCarthy : “ The common taunts addressed to public men who have changed their opinions were hardly ever applied to him. Even his enemies felt that the one idea always inspired him—a conscientious anxiety to do the right thing. None accused him of being one of the politicians who mistake, as Victor Hugo says, a weathercock for a flag. With many qualities which seemed hardly suited to a practical politician ; with a sensitive and eager temper, like that of Canning, and a turn for theological argument that as a rule Englishmen do not love in a statesman ; with an impetuosity that often carried him far astray, and a deficiency of those genial social qualities that go so far to make a public success in Eng-

land, Mr. Gladstone maintained through the whole of his career a reputation against which there was hardly a serious cavil. The worst thing that was said of him was that he was too impulsive, and that his intelligence was too restless. He was an essayist, a critic, a Homeric scholar; *dilettante* in art, music, and old china; he was a theological controversialist; he was a political economist, a financier, a practical administrator whose gift of mastering details has hardly ever been equaled; he was a statesman and an orator. No man could attempt so many things and not occasionally make himself the subject of a sneer. The intense gravity and earnestness of Gladstone's mind always, however, saved him from the special penalty of such versatility; no satirist described him as not one but all mankind's epitome."

According to Mr. Henry Dunckley, the most striking feature of Mr. Gladstone's character is expressed in the word force, power in action. "He received as a happy inheritance a larger stock than most men of what George Eliot describes as 'solar energy.' He was born in and still inhabits a tropical clime, under the sun's 'directer ray,' and a temperature which, with others, would pass for fever heat is his normal elevation. It is this that has made him what he is. But for this endowment, supposing all the rest of his intellectual character to have been the

same, the result would have been widely different. His contemplative tendencies might have led him to some pious retreat, where he would have meditated upon the problems of the universe and the mysteries of the Church ; or if he had taken to politics, he might have been known as a cultivated speaker, and have discharged with credit the duties of a Junior Lord of the Treasury, but he would never have become the foremost of England's living statesmen. With this blending of a contemplative spirit and a restless thirst for action, if he had lived in the Middle Ages he would probably have found his way to the cloister, with such men as Lanfranc and Anselm. He would have ruled his order, the monks would not have led a quiet life, and refractory monarchs and nobles would have felt the weight of his censures. Having been born, happily for us, in the nineteenth century, he found an appropriate sphere in politics, but the spiritual element asserts itself, penetrating and traversing his character in all directions, like seams of primitive granite.

“ This central fire of his nature affects everything. It gives its specific type to his imagination, which seems to consist in the fusing of his ideas, so as to set all their associations free and leave them to course along with but little guidance, except that which they derive from their imperious affinities. They are sometimes his master ; they yield with reluctance to the disci-

pline of 'discrete thought.' It seems as if, under his ardent gaze, they grew and glowed till they filled and inflamed the whole sphere of intellectual vision. The passion that has kindled them is for the time supreme, and will continue so till the flame is self-consumed. Ideas of this high temperature demand a diction of corresponding pitch, and they find it in a style which is at once stately and solemn, exuberant and rhythmical; in imperial sentences which go circling round like the orreries of an astronomical lecture, each vanishing away into space, to be followed by another and another in endless succession, till the wondering spectator is more than half convinced by the mere spell of admiration. . . . But his most potent mastery over us is derived from the strength and the transparent honesty of his convictions, and from the purity and elevation of his character, aided by the recollections which the sight of him awakens of a public career so blameless, disinterested, and beneficent. His moral earnestness is the secret of his political growth. He has believed ardently and practiced sincerely, and so has found his way to better things. Hence it has come to pass that the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories of fifty years ago, after a course of steadily augmenting luster, is to-day the bright and not yet setting star of progress and reform."

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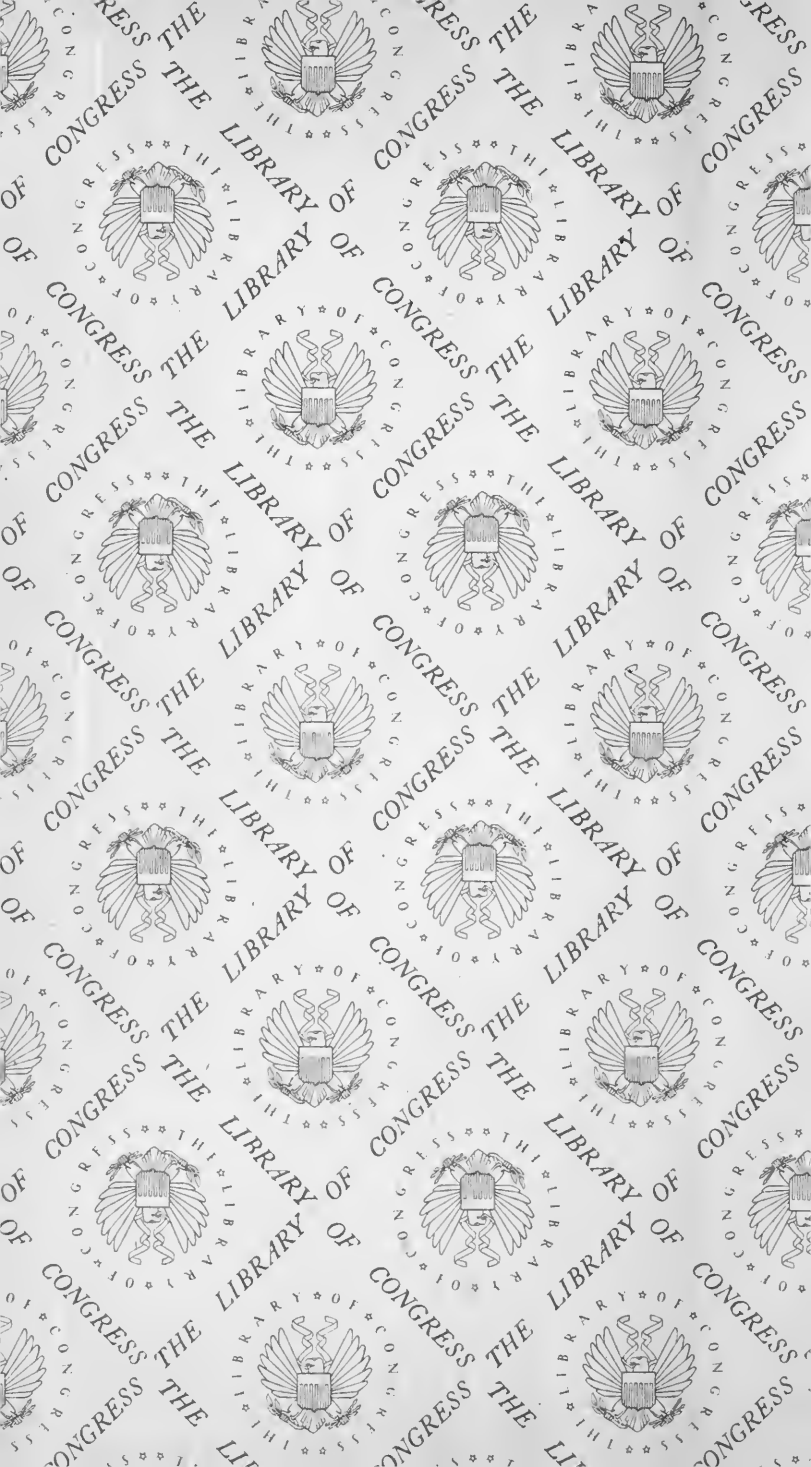
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